

T H E
C O N F U S I O N
O F T H E

Builders of B A B E L :

B E I N G A

C o l l e c t i o n o f L E T T E R S ,
S H E W I N G

That they who ought to build *Jerusalem*, set themselves most against the Divine Truth, and endeavour each to build his own *BABEL* of Confusion, where they neither will, nor can understand the Language of G O D.

By Mrs. *ANTONIA BOVRIGNON*.

Psal. CXVIII. 22, 23.

The Stone which the Builders rejected is become the head Stone of the Corner. This is the Lord's Doing, and it is marvelous in our Eyes.

L O N D O N;

Printed for *R. Burrough* and *J. Baker*, at the *Sun* and *Moon* in *Cornhill*. MDCCVIII.



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THE Letters of this small Collection are much of the same Matter and Subject with those which Mrs. Bourignon publish'd in her own Life-time, under the Title of *The Grave of false Theology*; where, upon Occasion of the Difficulties which the Clergy-men rais'd against her, she discovers their Errours, Confusions, Partialities, Disorders, and the wilful Resistance they make to the Truth and Holiness of the saving Doctrine which she proposes from God.

Here we see how by the Means of those Men the Church of God has been blinded, corrupted, seduced, and is become a Synagogue of Satan, a Babel of Confusion, and the real Babylon described in the Revelation of St. John.

Here we see how those Gentlemen, being blinded and infatuated each with the Sentiments which they have blindly derived from their Forefathers and from their Party, and oftentimes from Humane and Heathenish Learning, are incapable of acknowledging, and far more of embracing and recommending the Truth, which appears at present in the Divine Simplicity, Sincerity and Ingenuity, which is so becoming and so essential to those who would become Children, and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven in the Quality of little Children. Which those great Men do no sooner discover, but, after the Manner of Goliath, they arm themselves from Head to Foot with all their Scholastick Armour, join'd with the Contempt and Imprecations with which that Giant treated the little and simple David, and his poor and simple Armour, which in effect, setting aside the Divine Force and Spirit, was very mean and pitiful according to the Course of the World; but which, with the Divine Spirit, serv'd for an Instrument of that Victory which delivered the People of God.

Here we see how those Builders, when they set themselves to build, do nothing but draw People each to their own Way, into their Sentiments, into their Party, and into their Sect, for their own Honour, Glory and Advantage; instead of lead-
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ing Men to Christ, to the Simplicity of his Doctrine, and the Holiness of his Life.

Here we see, that when they would better or repair their Buildings, that is to say, when they would make Reformati^ons, they follow only their own Caprice, cover'd with the Letter of the Scripture, and each of them make Forts and Buildings in Opposition to one another, yea, they spend all their Time in fighting, and throwing at each other Stones, Lime, Sand, and all their Materials, leaving to the Mercy of the open Air, to Rains and Tempests, those for whom they ought to prepare an useful House for their Shelter, and who are become the Spectators of their Combats and Duels.

Here we see, when they would rear up what has been thrown down, that is, when they would convert those who are gone astray, they can do nothing but propose to them to change their Sect, and embrace the Party which they recommend to them. Deplorable Blindness! As if true Conversion did consist in any other thing than in a Change of Heart and Life; and as if true Religion were any other thing than the Imitation of the Life of Christ, and the Practice of his simple and saving Doctrine touching the Renouncing of all Things, the Mortification of one's self, and Resignation to the Will of God.

Nevertheless this true Conversion and Religion is that for which they have no Regard, which they do not seek after, which they reject so much, and of which they who pretend to be the Builders are the greatest Enemies and Destroyers, as they are also of those whom God sends from time to time to re-establish it. But it will prevail at last, by the Grace of God, who having overthrown all the Buildings made with Mens Hands, and confounded Babel and its Builders, will establish for the Chief and Foundation-Stone that Stone which the Builders have rejected. May it please God to begin to verifie it in our Souls. Amen.

THE

THE
CONFUSION
OF THE
Builders of BABEL:

LETTER I.

*The Builders of Babel cannot endure that their
Companions leave the Work. Under a pretext of
Reformation, they will needs establish and support
Babel by the most pernicious Errours*

S I R,

1. **N.** Tells me that I ought to advise you to re-
turn to your Cure ; that neither the Bishop's
Chancellor, nor he, will bear with your
Absence any longer ; which shews that he is sunk into
the most profound Darkness. I know not if this will
make you change. It appears evidently that the *Time*
of *Restitution* draws near ; for the Devil strives every
where to thwart the Works of God, who told me
truly,

truly, that *Paris*, and the *Jansenists*, was none of my *Business*; seeing they set up to reform the Church even by *Errours*, among which there was never a greater than that of *Predestination*, as you may discover by the five Letters * which I have written to you, of which I send you the two first : The fifth is already swelled to Seven Sheets, and I do not yet see the End of it.

2. It is like a Fountain that cannot be dried up. In it I treat of the State of the Creation of the World and Men : How all things were then ; and how they shall be restored unto the same Perfection in which God Created them : This is so clearly represented, that none can doubt of it but they who wilfully persist in their *Errours*.

3. The Devil opposes this Light; and he leaves off to promote the Signing of his Formulary, that he may gain the more. He saw that he could not yet gain all good Men by the Force of this Subscription, and therefore he strives now to gain all the rest by a false Reformation of the whole Church. He could never cover himself with a fairer Cloak. These are his most cunning Stratagems, from which he derives the greatest Advantage; and he has still done his greatest Feats under appearances of Good : For else he would gain none but the Wicked. He began to give a sweet Morfel to good Men by the Condemnation which the Pope made of some bad Maxims ; and now he is like to make them take large Draughts of his Cup by the shew of a general Reformation. Mark all well, and you will perceive this clearly.

*Amsterdam, Octob.
27th, 1668.*

* *They are those of the New Heaven, and the New Earth.*

LET.

LETTER. II.

The Builders of Babel cannot bear with those who Build Jerusalem: And they accuse them of the Evils of which they themselves are guilty, as of Divisions and Troubles. They blame them for omitting the use of outward Ceremonies, while they themselves neglect the Essence of Christianity, the Virtues and Commands of Jesus Christ. Each of them would draw all others to themselves and bind their Consciences, that they might lord it over the whole World, as did the Powers of the Old Babel.

S I R,

I Perceived by what you were pleased to write formerly to Mr. Tielens, that the Ministers of the Reformed Church despise you, because you Read my Writings, and have an esteem for me and my Doctrine; and even with Contempt and Calumnies, they bring you many Reasons to despise them. This cannot come from a good Spirit, since they have no ground to do it; for I never did them any evil; I do not know them, and they likewise own that they do not know me, and that they have not read my Writings: And yet they tell you, that you do ill to read or follow them.

2. You see how absurd the Spirit and Procedure of those Persons are who count themselves Wise: For to say that a Thing is Evil, before they know it, is to speak without any ground; and to say that you do ill to follow the Doctrine that I teach, without knowing whether it is good or bad, is to act like a Hair-brain'd Fool, who knows not what he says. I thought such Persons would have had more fear of God, and more care of their Reputation, than to alledge Falshoods that they might Calumniate me: For tho' Lying is subtle, yet Truth is more powerful, and confounds Liars.

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3. I understand by yours of the 26th of Decemb. (which I received yesterday) that these Preachers accuse me of many Crimes; and I cannot observe so much as one true thing in all their Accusations; but they are Fictions, quite contrary to true matters of Fact. For they say first, *That you ought to avoid my Person, and not to follow my Instructions, because I would raise Divisions in Christendom.* And they cite some Passages of Scripture, to shew that the Apostles forbade to follow those who make Divisions in the Church. This would be a good Advice for you, if it were true, that I aim'd to raise Divisions in Christendom: You ought in such a Case to obey those Teachers, and not to follow my Doctrine, which would be Evil; for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Peace and Union, and not of Quarrels and Divisions. Christ prayed unto his Father before his Death, and beg'd that (a) *His Disciples might be one, even as he and the Father were one.*

4. And if I were not possessed with that same Spirit of Union which Christ pray'd for unto his Father, I would not be his, and you ought not to believe me, and far less to follow me: But if those Preachers had read my Writings, they could never have accused me of this Crime of Division; since I testify in so many divers Places, how much I bewail the Schisms and Divisions that have happened in Christendom, which I would deplore with Tears of Blood: For those Divisions have brought in Hatred and Enmity amongst Christians, and make them hate one another because of their different Sentiments: Whereas had they remain'd united together, this mutual Hatred amongst them had never risen to so great a height. Wherefore I would have been very far from causing Divisions amongst Men, since I look upon this as the greatest Evil in the World.

5. And those Preachers have no ground to compare me, (as you write they do) to those who make Divisions in England: For I do not think that any of these are guided by a Good Spirit, but rather by an Evil one: And even those Quakers who call themselves *God's peculiar People, and Men enlightened by the Holy Spirit*, are, in my Opinion, led by the Evil Spirit; as I have sufficiently

(a) Joh. 17. 21.

made appear in the *Warning* I have writ against them, which will be Published ere long, and you will do well to shew it to the Preachers; since there they will find many of their Doubts resolved, and will have also the Confusion of seeing the Falshood of their Accusations against me, and that they build their Calumnies upon false Foundations, and false Suppositions, which are entirely contrary to true matter of Fact.

6. For they say, that *I despise the Sacraments and other outward Devotions*; when, I think, no Person can esteem them more than I do; for these Quakers accused me in the scurrilous Pamphlet they wrote against me, that *I had an abominable Doctrine of sending People to Church, or to Sermons, or the Sacraments, or other outward Devotions*; and they would conclude from this that I had not the Spirit of God, since I esteemed still those outward Devotions, and persuaded others also to use them as means to draw near to God.

7. Your Preachers may read what I have written up on this Subject in that *Warning*, so that I need say no more here about it; but I will satisfy them as to what they say, that in effect *I despise the Sacraments and other outward Devotions, because I myself do not go to the Church, nor to the Sacraments*; and they would repel all I say in the Praise of Holy things by this, that I do not observe them myself, to give example unto others; and they infer from this, that *I speak with Dissimulation, in Praise of those Holy things, and not sincerely as I think in my Heart*. But those Jealousies they have concerning me, make me see sufficiently that they do not at all know me; for if they knew me only outwardly, they would see plainly, that I am sincere, and not feigned, or a dissembler: So that if I had in my Heart a contempt for the Sacraments and other outward Devotions; I would declare it openly by word and writing; because I have overcome the World, and am not afraid to speak the Truth of what I know.

8. I have written indeed against the *Abuse* of the Sacraments and other outward Devotions; but I never spoke against the things themselves: since they are good, and have often been Means of Uniting me to God, as I have written in the foresaid *Warning*. But if I go not now to Church, or Sacraments, this is not done out of

of a Contempt of Holy Things, but because I have not now so great need of outward Means of Union with God, as I had formerly, when the Conversation of others, and the Diversion of Worldly Affairs, withdrew me from attending upon him: I went then to Church, and receiv'd the Sacraments, that I might be the more recollected, and united unto God. But since God gave me the Grace to find this Recollection in my Closet, and to converse in Spirit with God in Solitude, I judg'd it not so necessary to use those outward Ceremonies, which sometimes would prove a Distraction to my inward Recollection.

9. This is partly the Reason why I have left them off; but this is not all: For if I had Liberry to go to Church, I would still go on the Days appointed, and would receive the Sacrament at the time appointed for it: since I am under the Ordinances of the *Roman Church*, and *Christ* has taught me to obey the Laws of God and Man, as he himself did when he was on Earth, yielding obedience to *Cæsar*, and to other Superiours, tho' these were sometimes evil, but their Commands were good; as I have shew'd particularly in the foresaid *Warning*, which your Preachers may read, and may have Satisfaction as to all their Pleas against me.

10. And if notwithstanding all this they still affirm, that I despise the Holy Solemnities, because I do not observe them my self; I will say, that I have Reasons more than sufficient for doing this, which abundantly excuse me for not going to Church; since I cannot go thither without hazard of my Life; and it is not lawful for me to expose my self to so evident Danger; and Necessity has no Law. There are Persons in the *Roman Church* who act just like your Preachers, and say without any Ground, that I am become an Heretick; and therefore *they would think they did God Service if they should kill me*; yea, they have sought several Occasions to murder me, which God was pleased timely to discover unto me, that I might avoid them: And if I should yet go to their Churches, I do not think I could return alive; but they would stone me, as the *Jews* did *St. Steven*, for having spoke the Truth; and being born and brought up in the *Roman Church*, I am not permitted to go into another, without a mortal Sin (according to their Ordinances *)

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nances :—) So that I am constrain'd to remain in Solitude, and dare not go to Church ; which I willingly bear, and comfort my self with this, that many holy Fathers were well-pleasing unto God, though they lived in Desarts, and did not use the Sacraments, nor other outward Solemnities. A *Paul*, an *Anthony*, an *Hilarion*, did many Miracles of quite another sort than what your Preachers boast of, namely, that there are among those of *Calvin's* Reformation so many Martyrs, that they may excite you to imitate them, by continuing addicted to the Opinions that he maintain'd, which cannot save your Soul.

11. For all that *Calvin* said is not conformable to the Gospel ; and what he spoke truly every one is obliged to follow ; because the Truth is of God, and is to be esteem'd wheresoever it may be found, whether among *Papists*, *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists*, as your Preachers are, whom you do well to follow when they teach you the Truths of God. But all *Calvin's* Opinions are not true, and they who die to maintain 'em, die Martyrs of the Devil, and not of Christ ; so that it would be a weak Foundation for you to rest upon the Doctrine or Religion of *Calvin*, as your Preachers do ignorantly perswade you : For to be saved one must be a Christian, and not a *Calvinist*, as those Preachers say you must be, and require a Declaration of your Faith, whether you are yet *Calvinist* or not ?

12. And if they ask'd me that Question, to wit, If I were yet in the Religion in which I was born ? I would say, Yes, in the Spirit of Christ, and not otherwise : For I am in the *Roman* Communion, and I desire not to leap from one Religion into another, as those wavering Persons do ; but I will endeavour to perfect my self in the Doctrine of Christ, referring the rest to the Judgment of God, and not condemning any. And I think you have done well not to enter in Debate with those Preachers, neither in the Matter of Religion, nor as to my Writings and Person : For these have no need to be maintain'd by humane Reasons or Arguments, seeing those Writings have in them sufficient Evidences of the Truth : And as for me, I desire not to be approved by Men ; for I do not aim at, or desire any thing in this World ; and you will do better not to maintain my Quarrel against those Preachers, than to strive to prove to them the Truth of
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what I say; for that will profit them nothing; since they are the Blind, of whom Christ says, that (b) *If they knew they were blind they would see clearly; but because they say, We see, therefore they are blind.*

13. For what greater Blindness of Mind can they have, than to believe that the Calvinist Church is the most perfect of all the Churches in Christendom; and that they who are in it are the Elect of God, and predestinated to Salvation? while we see they live in a Looseness of Manners, and in a Neglect of all that savours of Piety and Devotion, more than those of any other Party of Religion; and they give themselves up to follow their own Wills, and to seek after that which is pleasing to Flesh and Blood; though Christ has expressly said, that (c) *Flesh and Blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* So that this Church cannot be founded upon the Doctrine of Christ, and therefore it is not safe to lean to it: For this Reason if you are obliged to answer your Preachers, and to tell them whether you are Calvinist or not, say only, that you endeavour to become a true Christian; and that you could not hinder your self from being born in the Calvinist Church; but that withal those Preachers cannot hinder you from following the Truth of God, which you find in my Writings, or elsewhere, or which you shall happen to meet with now or afterwards, wherever it may be; because God created you free to do this; and it is not Mens Business to take this Liberty from you; and that you are convinc'd that the Truth of God is in my Writings; and that if they can discover in them any thing that is evil, or contrary to this Truth, they may be pleased to let you see it, that you may avoid it: But that as to other things it does not become them to tie Mens Consciences to any Rules of Calvin, or of any other Authors, who have spoken according to their own Sentiments, rather than according to the Truth of God, of which they were often ignorant, and did not perceive it, by reason of the Prejudices of their Minds, or their strong unmortified Imaginations.

(b) *John 9. 41.* (c) *1 Cor. 15. 50.*

14. So that you must not take your Measures by this, but let them say what they please, and do not trifle away your Time with them, when God calls you out of the Hurry of the World: For if the Apostles had gone to ask Counsel of the Learned, of the Priests and Pharisees of that Time, certainly they would never have advised them to follow *Jesus Christ*; because they would desire still to be Masters in *Israel*, and to lord it over all Men.

15. They would not have suffer'd any to withdraw from a Dependence upon them, no more than your modern Preachers will do, who regard more their Authority over Men, than the Salvation of their Souls. For this cause they strive more to keep you subject to them, than to persuade you to follow Christ; because they are concern'd about the one, and not about the other; for they are honour'd and respected by those that follow them, and they do not lose their Dominion by the Damnation of Souls, at which they are very little concern'd, provided they be subject to them during this Life: They do not regard Eternity, because they do not know it, nor apprehend it. Therefore do not trouble your self with their fine Discourses; but seek after the Truth of God where you may find it, and (d) it will make you free.

16. As to what your Preachers tell you, *That they have seen my Letters which I wrote to a Jesuit in Holstein*, it is as impudent a Falshood as the rest; for never in my Life did I write to any Jesuit in *Holstein*, nor received I any Letter from one; and therefore I know not what your Preachers mean when they say I exchanged Letters with some Jesuits in *Holstein*, except that they desire to speak ill of me; and since they can find no Ground for it, they must invent Lies, else they ought to hold their Peace; which they are not enclin'd to do. If you can draw from them any Accusations they have against me in Writing, send me them, and I will answer them as the Thing deserves; but for Lies and Falshoods, they deserve no Answer. We must let them bark as Dogs do at those they know not.

(d) *John* 8. 32.

17. But as for you, continue firm to the Truth of God, and labour to become a true Disciple of *Jesus Christ*, in following his Doctrine. This is that at which all my Writings aim, and not that I may be follow'd or approv'd by blind Men, who know not where they walk, and often embrace Falshood for Truth, and even cannot endure that the plain Truth should come to Light, because it tacitly reproves them: For otherwise they would leave every Man at Freedom to read what he pleased, when there is nothing in it contrary to God and the Doctrine of the Gospel; which cannot be found in my Writings, for they are in Substance altogether agreeable to the Gospel; so that they ought not so much to enquire so narrowly into my Person, as into the Truths I advance; and since they proceed from God, every one will do well to follow them, even though they had been written by the Devil himself.

18. Of this you may convince your Preachers, and by this you may direct your self in time to come: And if you are convinced that I am guided by the Holy Spirit, you may follow me; but if you have not this Testimony in your Conscience, you ought to wait till you know it better: In which I give you full Liberty. For I seek none; but I wish only that all Christians may be united in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*. In doing which I remain

Your very Affectionate in J.C.

1672.

Ant. Bourignon.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

They who set up for the Restorers of Israel, are Builders of Babel, and are led by the Spirit of Antichrist.

My Child,

1. I Was well pleased to hear of your safe Arrival at *Hamburg*, and to know where you lodge. There is no Fault in your having discours'd the Disciples of *Labadie*, to know what Opinion they have of me: But I think there is no need of your speaking to them any more. If they bring you in Writing the Contradictions, which, they say, are to be found in my Writings against the Holy Scriptures; you may receive them, and bring 'em to me; but if they do not this of themselves, do not ask it of them. For I love much rather to write of solid Virtue, than to engage in Controversie; and I think what I have written concerning *Berkendal* will suffice for all.... They will not seek any more to set up against me; for they are all worsted by that Treatise; and the last, which you have not seen, is far better than what you have seen; and all that they could say or do against those Truths will serve only for their Confusion.

2. But it is pity that Well-meaning Persons suffer themselves to be catch'd by their Lies. They have nothing but affected Words whereby to amuse good People. If C. R. thinks they have the Holy Spirit, he is greatly deceived, and yet more if he thinks their Sentiments are not contrary to mine; seeing they have nothing that resembles me. This is nothing but a false Shew of Piety, and an apish Imitation which the Devil would make of the Works of God; for in effect *Labadie*, and all his Train, have nothing of the Spirit of *Christ*, and much of that of *Antichrist*.

3. I tell you this Truth, because I know it from God; and therefore C. R. ought not to let himself be surpriz'd, nor to think that I do not know them; since I know them better than they know themselves; and I judge they and I are at as great Distance as is Heaven and Hell. So

that if I am led by the Spirit of God, they are led by that of the Devil. Think in your Conscience what may be of that Matter. It were not amiss if you could learn from any, whether they yet encline to buy *Noordstrand*, or not; if not, leave all to God. ** is in *Noordstrand*, and has ended nothing with **; perhaps God will yet make that Country to be overflow'd with Water before his Children come thither.

March 25.

1673.

LETTER IV.

To a Priest of the Oratory.

Of her Enemies seeking to examine her Books.

Reverend Father,

1. I Am very desirous to know if you have received any Answer from our Friends in *Brabant* about my Affairs of *Noordstrand*. Pray let me know by the first. I hear there is a Commission come from *Rome* to examine my Books, and that this is to be done in *Noordstrand*, by a French Priest, one of the Province of *Brabant*, and a Jesuit Pastor of *Fredrickstadt*, who are all my Enemies. I wish therefore you may request them from me to act discreetly in that Matter, if they would preserve the Honour of the *Roman Church*: For if they act in Passion, or accuse me of any Faults without Ground, I cannot be silent when I am concern'd to defend the Truth.

2. If they are wise then, they will not accuse me wrongfully, lest I be obliged to speak against the Errours of our Religion, that which perhaps they desire not to hear. . . . I continue,

Reverend Father,

Octob. 13.

1673.

Your most humble Servant,

A. B.

LET

LETTER V.

To the same.

The Priests, and they who slander her, being troubled for her discovering the Corruptions of Babel, endeavour to accuse her falsely, and to catch her in her Words.

Reverend Father,

1. I Perceived by yours of the 25th of October last, that you are possess'd with Prejudices against me and my Writings, which heretofore seem'd to you good and profitable to Salvation; and they who heard you preach at that Time, said, You taught the same Doctrine that is contain'd in my Writings: But now they say, You teach the contrary, and say publickly, That they who say they have the Holy Spirit are not to be believed; but that we must keep by the Gospel, seeking thus to limit the Holy Scriptures, and the Operations of the Blessed Spirit, as if he had imparted all his Graces to the ancient Prophets, to the Apostles, and to the Disciples of Christ, and were barren to Men now a-days, who could receive no other Divine Knowledge, than what the Apostles received; tho' they themselves declare openly, (c) *We know in part, and we prophesie in part; but when the Fulness of Time shall come, then shall we know and prophesie in full Perfection.* By which the Apostles give to understand, that the Light of the Holy Spirit shall in the last Times be imparted to pure Souls in more abundance than it was imparted to the Apostles in the Time of Jesus Christ.

2. You do well, Reverend Father, to preach that we must hold by the Gospel; for if you could bring your Hearers to observe it, there would be no need of my writing any thing for 'em; since all my Writings, my Life and Doctrine, aim at nothing, but to let Christians see how far they are now estranged from a Gospel-Life, and to

(c) 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10.

teach them the Means by which they may return to the Practice of it.

3. But it seems you have forgot this, and let your self be possess'd with false Perswasions : For you speak to me as if I had changed my Religion, as if I despised Baptism, and as if there were Contradictions in my Writings. I cannot be perswaded that such Sentiments proceed from the Bottom of your Soul ; but that you have been drawn into them by my open Enemies ; and that you are not artful enough your self to discover the Malice of those who speak to you, and tell you Lies for Truth ; to whom you easily acquiesce, because you do not know me, and never saw me, nor conversed with me. You have indeed known my Writings in part ; but when some Enemies raise Objections against them, you incline to their Side, and slight the Truth of God, that you may listen to the Discourses of Men, and receive bad Impressions by their Lies ; as I see you have done in all that concerns me.

4. For you are perswaded, as I perceive by yours, that I contradict the chief Points of the Christian Religion ; and that I say both by Word and Writing, That Baptism is not necessary, and that I am cunning, and a Dissembler, like the *Anabaptists* ; and that accordingly I counsell'd M-- the Barber to deceive you, and make you believe that his little Daughter was baptiz'd. All which things are Falshoods and Lies, and not one of them true. For I neither feign nor dissemble, and am far from advising any Person to feign or deceive by Word or Deed ; far less would I deceive any in the Matter of Religion. And I am so ingenuous and sincere, that if I had changed my Religion, or if I were to change it, I would declare it publicly to all the World, and tell the Reasons that moved me to this Change. But on the contrary, I write and declare publicly, that I am born in the *Roman Church*, and that I will live and die in it, as you your self cite in your's many Passages out of my Writings, in which I make this Profession.

5. But, among other things, you come to relate, that I say, *One must not be wedded obstinately to the Heads and Members of any outward Church* ; and from hence you would fix some Contradiction on my Writings, where there is none, though there seem to be some in several Places

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Ibid. v

Places of the Holy Scriptures. For on the one Hand, God commands (f) *To honour Father and Mother*; and on the other, *Jesus Christ* teaches, *To hate and forsake them* (g), in order to become his Disciples: And in many Places *Jesus Christ* says, (h) *Peace I give unto you, my Peace I leave with you*: and elsewhere he says, (i) *I am not come to bring Peace on Earth, but a Sword, and Variance between Father and Children, &c.* Again *J. Christ* says, (k) *That he who eats his Flesh and drinks his Blood shall have eternal Life*; and thereafter he says, (l) *That his Flesh profiteth nothing, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth.* Read, my Father, the Holy Scriptures: You will find there a great many seeming Contradictions, which a captious Spirit would condemn, and seek to catch the Holy Spirit in his Words, as the *Pharisees* did *Jesus Christ*, who knew well enough the Truth of his Works: But they endeavour'd to surprize him in his Words, as they seek also to surprize me.

6. For I have spoke the Truth, and writ the Things which I learn'd of God, and not of Men; and yet they would condemn me of Heresies, as you also condemn what I have said in the Third Part of *The Grave of False Theology*, Lett. 11. *That I see no Salvation for those who are obstinately addicted to the Heads and Members of the visible Church*; though this is a Truth of God, that all those Heads and Members are disjointed, dislocated or rotten, and that Christendom, which is God's Spouse, is so disfigured, that she cannot be known any longer. For Christendom is the true visible Church, as the *Jews* were in former Times. I am far therefore from despising or rejecting the Substance of Christianity, as you insinuate in your's; since I still hold it for the true Spouse of the infallible God, which, as to the Essentials of it, shall never perish: But yet I do not believe that those who call themselves the Heads and Members of the Christian Church are infallible; since in effect we have often seen the principal Heads and Members of it fall into great Errours in Matters of Faith and Religion; and it is yet fresh in our Memory,

(f) *Exod.* 20. 12. (g) *Luke* 14. 26. (h) *John* 14. 27. (i) *Matth.* 10. 34, 35. (k) *John* 6. 54. (l) *Ibid.* v. 63.

how those Heads and Members would have had the immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and the Pope's Infallibility, to have been received as Articles of Faith; as likewise the Condemnation of *Jansenius* his Books, and several other Things, which could not be condemn'd or judged by the true Church; nor could she appoint those Things to be believed as Articles of Faith, which are not truly such. This gave me Occasion to write to Mr. *de Cor*, that I saw no Appearance of Salvation for those who were obstinately wedded to the visible Heads and Members, who are not guided by the Holy Spirit; since they who blindly follow with Obstinacy all the Things which these Members propose, dare not receive the Light of the Holy Spirit, which is to come and renew the Earth.

7. For such Heads and Members will not approve the Things which would be to their Disadvantage; but those which give them Authority and Favour, that they may live in Honour and Wealth, though God would have them poor and mean: And they who are obstinately wedded to those Heads and Members, will not dare to receive the Light of the Holy Spirit, if it is not approv'd by those Persons, who usually oppose it, that they may keep up their old Authority. And I believe it is of such Adherences, that *Christ* says, *(m)* *That this is their Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men have loved Darkness rather than Light.*

8. By which you may easily understand, that I do not reject the Holy Church in its Substance, as you write to me, since she is my true Mother, and the lawful Spouse of God; but I reject the Frauds and Errours which are crept into this Holy Church, and I greatly blame the Whoredoms and Infidelities which those Souls commit against their lawful Husband, who is *Jesus Christ*. It is against this Corruption that I speak, and would gladly recover out of it all well-meaning Souls, who out of Scruple or Devotion dare not believe the Truth of so evident an Evil.

9. For from whence proceed all those Schisms and different Religions, but from the Corruptions and Errours of the *Roman Church*, which by the Excess of her

(m) *John*. 3. 19.

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Whoredoms has brought forth as many Children as there are different Sects of Religion in Christendom: For had it not been for these Corruptions, none could have withdrawn from her with Honour; as all the Reform'd have, with those who follow them. For they have seduced the People, by letting them see the Errours and Corruptions of the *Roman Church*, and under this Pretext they set up to reform some Errours, and by this their Reformation they establish'd greater Errours than those from which they pretended to reform. So that I am very far from the Opinion of those Reformers, though you tell me, that *Luther* and *Calvin* did not despise the chief Fundamental Points of Religion as I do; and you found your Assertion upon Falshoods; for you say in your's, *That I write and publish, that Baptism is not necessary*; which I absolutely deny, and I wish you would cite to me the Place where I have written any such thing.

10. But if *Marci* only told you, that I had declared this by Word of Mouth, you have reason to suspect him of a Lie, for he has told many a one of me, and particularly when he said to you, That all he had done was by my Advice; for he would not follow it in any thing, and he did all things contrary to what I advised him, both for his temporal and spiritual Good. So that I seeing this, was obliged to let him follow his own Will, and not to give him any more Advice: And when his Wife was deliver'd of Two Children, he sent to ask my Advice if he should baptize them or not? Upon which I order'd to tell him, that I had no Advice to give him, since he would not follow my Counsel; and that he might do what seem'd good to him; but that if it were my Case, I would call a Priest and baptize them forthwith. Upon this he requested that I would be God-mother; wherein I excused my self, and said, that I would not do it for my own Brother; that in this I had but too weighty Grounds of Scruple, and that he might find others, who would do it willingly, if so be he resolved to make them good Christians. He sent me word, that if I would not be God-mother he would not baptize them. He went notwithstanding next Day to ask for your Reverence, that he might have them baptized, and sent to ask me once more after your Arrival at *Husum*: This troubled me, and I had

made one tell him peremptorily the Day before, that I would not do it upon any Account, and that he might have many others. I think he did all this to affront us, and to take Occasion from a Spirit of Revenge to traduce me; after that I had done for him all that a Mother could do for her Son. He repays me with Ingratitude and Contempt, and says now, that he is *Mennonist* [or *Anabaptist*]; but if he had told me this before, I would never have kept him with me: For I love Christians only, and not others. I advised him when he went to *Noordstrand* to observe the Lord's Days and the Festivals, that he might not give Offence to any; and so much the rather, that he was enclined to this and other Devotions; but I never bid him deceive you, or make you believe that his little Daughter was baptiz'd; for I expressly advised him to baptize her when the Child was sick in *Noordstrand*, that she might not die without Baptism. All this that I tell you is most true, believe me as you please.

LETTER VI.

To Dr Swammerdam;

Whom a Friend of his, a new Roman Proselyte and Priest, was desirous (after the Manner of the Builders of Babel) to draw over to his Party; as if Holiness and Salvation were confined to it. If one ought to go over to the Roman Church? Of Penitence.

My Child,

I Perceive by yours, that God by his Divine Light makes you see that of Necessity you must forsake the World to become the Disciple of Christ. This you ought carefully to observe, since without it you cannot hope for Salvation; because of the Danger and Perils there are in conversing with the World, and these so exceeding great, that they are inevitable. For my part, I

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dare no longer converse with the World, even tho' God has given me his Spirit of Fortitude ; because the Devil has so many Wiles and subtle Inventions, that they can hardly be discover'd ; and he makes use sometimes of the most pious Men to make a Breach in the Heart of the Best-meaning : As he has made use of your Friend, of whom you write, that you know him to be a virtuous Person, and given to all sort of Piety and Devotion, while in the mean time he endeavours to seduce you, and others of our Friends, to embrace Falshood for Truth, and Idea's, or vain Imaginations, for true Virtue ; which you say, *Would have prevailed with you, if you had not known before-hand the Truth that God teaches me.*

2. In which you may observe the Danger there is now in conversing with Men, even such as seem to be the best. And you ought to bless God that he has deliver'd you out of those Dangers : For this was a Trap the Devil had laid whereby to catch your Souls, thinking thereby to withdraw you from the Truth, and make you follow Lies. And though your Friend had a good Intention, he was nevertheless in this the Devil's Instrument.

3. For if he had acted only according to natural Reason, he would not have labour'd to perswade you to enter into the *Roman Church* ; and he himself would have enquired into the Truth of my Writings, as he would have you to enquire into the Truth of the *Roman Church* ; and there he would have found more Christian Truth and solid Virtue, than you will find in all that he advanceth about the *Roman Church* : Since he says nothing of her that's of any Weight, and advances such weak Reasons, that he seems not to be a Philosopher, as you take him to be ; but a simple Man, that wants natural Reason.

4. For he would prove, that this Church is holy, because there have been Saints in her in all Ages : Though this gives no Sanctity unto the Church ; for there may be holy Persons in an erroneous Church, seeing the Perfection of a particular Person cannot sanctifie a whole Community ; yea, Christ himself did not sanctifie the Jewish Church, under which he was, and of which he made a Member ; while yet it remain'd forsaken of God,

God, and rejected by Men, as it is at present? And therefore your Friend cannot conclude that the *Roman Church* is holy, even though there were some holy Men in it.

5. For their being holy makes themselves only so, and not those who may call themselves *Romanists*, or by any other Name; seeing it is the Mother that must bring forth Children, and not Children the Mother. This would be against Nature, and a Thing altogether impossible. Just so it is impossible that a particular Person should give the Holy Spirit to his Church, even though his Soul in particular were possess'd of it: But if this Mother-Church were govern'd by the Holy Spirit, she would certainly bring forth Children of a like Nature; and then it would be desirable to be under such a Mother, that by her one might receive the Holy Spirit.

6. But alas! it must be acknowledged with Regret, that this Mother has brought forth so many wandering Children for 150 Years past, as your Friend owns, that Christendom is now in the Confusion of the Tower of *Babel*, where the Builders do not understand one another, and each speaks a different Language; and all those Divisions and Confusions have arisen from the Corruption and Degeneracy of the *Roman Church*, which your Friend would now sanctifie by the Use of the Sacraments, chiefly by Confession: Though elsewhere he boasts, that she has had so many holy Hermits, of whom nevertheless many never used the Sacraments, as you may read in the Lives of those ancient Fathers. Now if one could not be holy without this Confession, the *Roman Church* ought not to reckon *Paul*, *Anthony*, *Hilarion*, and so many others, to have been holy, who lived and died in the Desarts, without the Use of the Sacraments.

7. But your Friend is possess'd with a blind Zeal of encreasing his Church, before he has thoroughly penetrated into its State; and he is preoccupied with all the Arguments which they used to bring him over to the Communion of that Church; and he would fain convert others to it by the same Means. But I do not advise you to hearken to him, nor yet to go with him into *Italy*; for there is no Necessity of going to *Rome* to become holy.

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holy. Holiness may be obtain'd in any Place, if we will sincerely embrace the Means to attain it.

8. I have written in particular how we must pass Three Bridges to come to the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; and that Voyage will be more useful and profitable for your Salvation than to travel into *Italy*; where you will see Sin and Wickedness prevail as much as elsewhere, yea, in some manner to a greater Height. For as the Proverb is, *The nearer to Rome, the less Christian*. I advise you rather to travel towards Eternity, since you have found a Pilgrim that knows the Way to it. Follow her, and you will come to a good Harbour. Do not amuse your self with every thing that you meet in the Way; for Mens Discourses cannot save you, and are nothing but Amusements, that would hinder you in your Voyage.

9. Bid Adieu to this Friend, as you have done to other Things in your Verses; for his Friendship is dangerous so long as he is thus partial, and does not know that the Holy Spirit dwells in particular Souls. This is a Sign that he lives yet in corrupt Nature; for the Scripture says, that (n) *The carnal Man understandeth not the Things of the Spirit of God*. And St. Paul tells Men, that (o) *Their Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost*. Yet your Friend will not acknowledge any other Holy Spirit, but that which they make him believe to be in his Church; and indeed it were to be wished that the Holy Spirit did govern it: In which case I would counsel you, as your Friend does, to submit unto it. But long Experience has made me see clearly, that one does not receive the Holy Spirit for his entering into the *Roman Church*: And that few of her Children are endued with the Holy Spirit.

10. For I convers'd heretofore with those whom your Friend calls *Saints*, and I found them not such before God; and even those very Persons did hate and persecute me, because I spoke the Truth, and discover'd their Corruptions. So that instead of esteeming and encouraging those who have received the Holy Spirit, those Religious do reproach and defame them as much as they can, as your Friend likewise doth, when he blames you for

(n) 1 Cor. 2. 14. (o) *Ibid.* 6. 19.

esteeming my Writings and Person. And to make you change your Opinion he says, That Mrs. Schurmans will say the same things of Labadie that you say of me; and that the Reformed will likewise say the same of their Reformers: Which is weak Reasoning.

11. For though they should say of the most Wicked, yea, of the Devil himself, all the good things that they say of me, this cannot deprive me of the Graces that God has given me. And Christ himself was no less perfect, because they said, that (p) *He did his Works by the Power of the Devil; and that he was a Seducer of the People.* Even so I shall not be less perfect for the Contempt that he has of me: On the contrary, it is an Honour to me that such blinded ones speak evil of me. They would commend and praise me if I were as blind as themselves.

12. I am not to learn from him what Confession is; for I have frequented it more than perhaps he will do through all his Life. And it were a great Pity if Contrition were tied to Confession; since one must be contrite for his Sins as oft as he remembers them, and at least once every Day, when he examines his Conscience; and yet these things do not oblige him to confess, unless he find himself burthen'd with some Sin which he ought to declare for his Confusion, and to have Counsel or Strength to amend it; for the Scripture says, (q) *Confess your Faults one to another.* But I do no ways approve the repeating of Sins which are once confess'd, after having Contrition for them, and amending them; seeing God says, (z) *I deal with the penitent Sinner as if he had never offended me.* And I have known some so frail as to the Sins of the Flesh, that they would relapse as often as they remembered their past Sins, they taking Pleasure in the Remembrance of them.

13. And that it may appear, if what your Friend says is true, that frequent repeated Confessions give new Grace; we need only remark the Lives of those who practise frequent Confessions, and you will certainly find, that they become daily worse, contenting themselves with confessing their venial or mortal Sins, with-

(p) Matth. 12. 24. (q) James 5. 16. (z) Ezek. 18. 21, 22, &c.

out amending them. Wherefore you must not listen to those affected Discourses, but follow the Counsel of the Gospel; and in doing this you cannot be deceived. This is certified unto you by

Novemb. 9.
1674.

Antonia Bourignon.

LETTER VII.

The Builders of Babel, Enemies of Truth and Virtue, do each of them found the Building of their Sect upon Errours, which hinder Salvation. This was written upon Occasion of the calumnious and infamous Writings of Burchardus, a Lutheran Priest at Sleswick.

My Child,

1. **A**T last I send you the Book against *Burchardus*, which deserves to be well consider'd: For it contains Christian Truths and convincing Reasons, which serve to deliver many from their Errours. And therefore I judge it as useful for the Salvation of Souls, as what I taught concerning Solid Virtue, which cannot have a good Foundation in a Soul before all Errours be pluck'd out of it: For Errours in Belief are like noxious Weeds, that choak the good Grain of true Virtue. And if it were not for this Reason, I would never write of Matters of Controversie, and would let those ignorant Persons say all they pleased of me, and of my Writings, without answering 'em; since those Writings do sufficiently answer for themselves.

2. But when I observe that so many perish through Ignorance, because the Learned and the Preachers imprint Errours in them, instead of the Truth; I find my self obliged to withdraw them from those Errours, when Occasion offers, and when those Preachers attack me, and when I have discover'd their Errours, as God makes me see them amongst the divers Sects of Religion.

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3. For

3. For I found in the Church of Rome, that the Errour by which the People are most deceived, is, that they build their Salvation upon the Sacraments: And there is there such an Abuse in the use of them, that Men live and die in their Sins in Peace, hoping to be saved because they frequently Confess and Communicate, and receive the Sacraments at their Death. And they say of one who has received the Sacraments at Death, that he is certainly Saved, and that having these carefully Administred unto him, he is gone to rest in the Lord.

4. This is a great Cheat, which has carried many to Hell: For tho' the Sacraments are good, yet they can save none who die not in the Love of God, and are not in that Charity, which St. Paul describes: Adding, (s) that *tho' he had the Gift of Prophecies, and Faith to remove Mountains, and tho' he bestow'd all his Goods to feed the Poor, yea, and gave his Body to be burned; all this would avail nothing without Charity.* How then can one obtain Salvation, only for having received the Sacraments, seeing he cannot obtain it tho' he give all his Goods to the Poor, and his Body to be burned, and tho' he do Miracles and have the Gift of Prophecy? Is it not just to say that those who believe they shall be Saved, meerly because they receive the Sacraments, shall not be Saved; seeing Beasts, yea Devils, may receive the Sacraments?

5. By which it appears evidently, that the Guides now are Seducers, as God declares by his Prophets, saying, (t) *your Guides are Deceivers.* And elsewhere, speaking of the Last Times, Christ says, (u) *When you shall see the Abomination of Desolation in the Sanctuary; flee out of Judea, for its Destruction is near.* And what more sure mark can we have that this is now compleatly fulfilled? Since we see that the Priests in all the Parties of Religion seduce the People, and make 'em conceive Falshood for Truth; staining the Soul with Errors instead of true Faith, and Things that flatter corrupt Nature, instead of Penitence, without which Christ says, (x) *we shall all Perish.* And yet we hear no mention of this Penitence in any Party, as of a thing necessary to Salvation.

(s) 1 Cor. 13. 2, &c. (t) Isa. 9. 16. (u) Matt. 24. 15, 16. (x) Luk. 13. 3, 5.

6. For every one rejects it, and in place thereof espou-
ses some Sentiments which the Priests persuade them to
believe, for their own Glory and Interest, and not for
the Salvation of Souls. And this is the State of all Churches
now in general, where every one strives to draw to them-
selves, instead of leading to Christ : Which may well be
called an *Abomination*, that will render desolate all those
who shall have followed it. For where shall his Soul
turn at Death, who has placed his Hope upon deceitful
Things, when it shall perceive too late its Delusion,
and can have nothing then but a desperate Penitence ?
Which will make it utterly desolate, so as to curse the
Hour in which it heard and followed those Seducing
Priests, who deceive many, according to the Prediction of
Christ ; of which he gave Warning to all Christians,
when he said, speaking of the Last Times, (y) *Beware of
false Prophets, which shall come in my Name, and shall
work Signs, by which they shall deceive many.*

7. And People do not consider that 'tis of their Guides,
that he speaks under the Name of *false Prophets and De-
ceivers* : Because they think these are in God's Place, and
are sent by Him to rule and govern them ; which cannot
be true : For so long as they do not teach the Doctrine
of *Moses*, they sit not in *Moses Chair*, and direct not Men
according to God's Law : And therefore they cannot be
in his Place ; nor can they be sent by Him, when the
Doctrine they teach is contrary to that of *Jesus Christ*.
For all who are sent from God bring the same Message
to Men which *Christ* and his *Apostles* brought,
who do peremptorily affirm, that without *Charity* none
can be saved : And yet we see all Men now void of
this *Charity*, tho' they make one another believe that they
shall be Saved without the same.

8. For the *Catholicks* say, they shall be saved by the Sa-
craments, and the *Calvinists* say, they shall be saved by
Predestination ; and upon it, these found their Salvation,
without doing any thing to obtain the same : Which is
yet worse than the *Catholicks* ; for they do some good
Works, and frequent the Sacraments that they may ob-

(y) *Matt.* 24. 5, 24.

rain Salvation. But those Reformed do no more than the Beasts to be saved; for believing they are predestinated to Salvation, and that it cannot fail them, do what they please, they do nothing in order to attain it: Which is a great Error, and yet is embraced by a great number of Persons; because so many Learned Men maintain this Opinion, and Preach it to the People; and they Embracing this Error for Truth, continue in the broad Way, of which Christ says, *that it leads to destruction.*

9. How can I forbear then to declare those Truths which God makes known to me concerning the Errors of my Christian Brethren, when I know that many embrace them out of Ignorance, and thinking they do well in it; especially when their Preachers attack me, and give me occasion to refute them; as I have done the Catholicks, by the *Light of the World*; the Calvinists, by the *Testimony of Truth*; and the Lutherans, by this *Touch-stone*, which discovers evidently, that that Party errs in this Point of their Belief, that they think to be saved by the alone Merits of Christ, do what they will? Which is almost the same with the Belief of Predestination; for if Christ has satisfied all for them, they may live then according to the Motions of their corrupt Nature, and look for Salvation by his Merits. And thus all the three Parties of Religion go on in the broad Way, thinking by it to come to Life; tho' Christ has said, that (2) *Strait is the Way that leads unto it*; adding, that *few there be who walk in it.*

10. This may give great ground of Fear to all those who go on in the broad Way, because the Priests tell them that they shall be saved, the one by the Sacraments, the other by Predestination, and the third by the Merits of Christ, without resolving to imitate and follow him. So that I could not forbear to discover these Errours to those who are desirous to amend; that they may not perish thro' Ignorance. Wherefore I have composed this *Touch-stone*, that every one may try whether the Doctrine of these Priests be of a good or false Alloy; and that well-meaning Persons may go on steddily in their Belief, and

(2) *Matt. 7. 14*

may

may not suffer themselves any longer to be seduced thro' Ignorance.

II. I did not hear read unto me the Book which *Burchardus* has written against me, and is entituled, *Christian Remarks upon the Errours of Antonia Bourignon*, or some such thing; because I have none with me who can read *High Dutch*, and I have only understood that the Book is full of Lies and Calumnies, aiming to have me destroyed. But, I hope, God will not permit my Enemies to triumph over my Innocence. And because it is not my way to answer in order, to all the Points of my Accusers, and that my Brethren have told me that *Burchardus* cites divers Passages of Scripture in a contrary Sense, or that they serve not to prove what he would assert; I desired them to make a small Collection of the Faults and Falshoods he has committed in citing the Holy Scriptures; and * * has begun to do it, but has not finished it. This you may pursue, that it may be Printed in few words in the End of my Treatise: . . .

Jan. 23.

1675.

LETTER VIII.

A Short Advertisement to Men of Quality and Learning, with respect to the Touch-stone in High-Dutch; which is an Apologetical Book opposed to a Calumnious Libel of a Builder of Babel, against the Divine Truth.

I. **YOU** may wonder, Gentlemen, that contrary to the common use of Writers, I have delayed for almost Two Years and a Half, to answer the Book which *M. Burchardus* wrote against me. But know that

I lost no time, and that I answered him as soon as his Book was given me. And having Advice that his most Serene Highness the Duke of *Holstein* desired not that I should have any publick Dispute with his Preachers, I deferr'd to publish my Answer, until the said most Serene Highness should permit me to do it, or that I had left his Dominions to reside elsewhere.

2. And the Clergy of *Holstein* hindred me from doing both the one and the other; for having humbly, and by a Petition asked this permission at the Court of *Gottorp*, I could not obtain any Answer; and so was oblig'd to defer my answering *B.* till I had an exprefs Sentence as to the difficulty mov'd by those Clergy-men, concerning my Doctrine, which Sentence I have not yet obtain'd; but I have a verbal permission of his most Serene Highness to answer the said *Burchardus* in Writing. Since Madam, the Dutches Dowager, the President *Kielman*, and other Lords and Ladies, did maintain that the Accusations which *Burchardus* had brought against me in his Book, were supposed to be true, since I had not proved the contrary; his most Serene Highness found himself obliged to declare positively, that I ought to answer him that the Truth might appear.

3. And as soon as I was informed by the Deceas'd President Mr. *Kielman*, of the Prince's Will in this, I put my Manuscripts into the Hands of the said President; who said that it was a Loss that they were not Printed; and that I ought to cause it to be done quickly; as I have endeavour'd.

4. But whereas they still detain from me my Printing Press in the Castle of *Gottorp*, I could not Print it my Self, and I was fain to submit to the Conveniency of some Friends in *Holland*, who have not finished it till now; tho' the Book was ready for Printing in *April*, 1674.

5. For I do not require much time to Write my Books; since in order to make them, I read no Author, nor even the Text of the Holy Scriptures; because all that I ought to write is poured into the Understanding, and flows from my Pen, as a Fountain flows from the Spring. And so without any Study, I could have answered *Burchardus's* Book in less than six Weeks, as I answered the Book which the *Quakers* writ against me; which Answer

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was Written, Printed, and Published, in less than Three Months. This Book deserves to be read by the Learned, who by it may see that I do not take my Writings out of Authors, as they do, since *Burchardus* boasts of having read so many Histories and Authors that he might compose his Treatise against me: Which cannot be imputed to him as true Learning; for if they would strip him of all the Feathers he has taken from those other Birds, it is like he would be found wholly naked in the midst of the Field, as having neither Learning nor Virtue of his own to cover him, since he must borrow all from others.

6. For my part, I follow not that Measure, and I set down nothing in Writing, but what I prove by my Works and Practice. And therefore Men of Parts ought not to be stumbled if they do not find all the Formalities of the Schools in my Writings, nor if I let a Year pass before I answer those Writers; since neither the Prophets nor the Apostles, who writ by the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit, did observe those Formalities of the Schools, but followed the Spirit when he breathed on them.

7. And because I do the same, they would surprize me on every occasion. And I hear the Clergy-men take Advantage of my Silence, as if I were confuted by *Burchardus*, because I have not answered him within a Year after he wrote against me. This is nothing but pure Malice; for they solicited the Government that I might not answer them; else I had been permitted to do it at the beginning. I hope nevertheless that all Men of Sense will see by this my Answer, that I come not short in refuting sufficiently all the Assertions of *Burchardus*, and that the Falshood of all his Accusations is made appear by this Touch-stone.

8. But if any have still some Doubts remaining, as to what concerns my Person or Doctrine, I entreat they may read more of my Writings, and they will find more Satisfaction in these which are yet to be Printed; for there are yet more of them in Manuscript, than all those that are already Printed. For I cannot be afraid of any thing as to my Doctrine, since it proceeds from the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit, against which all other Sciences are dash'd in pieces as the Waves of the Sea are dash'd against a strong Rock.

9. Wherefore I cannot believe that any truly Wise Man will undertake to write against me, if he care for his Reputation; since the Truth is strong as Death, and is afraid of nothing, being founded in God. But some ignorant Persons presuming on their Learning, are fool-hardy enough to undertake such things, and they imagine that a simple Maid without Learning, cannot resist a whole Body of Divines, who have rather the Name than the Substance of Learning; seeing true Learning consists in solid Virtue, from which those pretenders to Learning are very far estrang'd; and they then esteem themselves wisest when they commit the greatest Follies, as our *Burchardus* has done, who is puffed up with the Courage of having writ against me, because some shallow Heads like his own, have commended this Work: tho' they would have done better not to have applauded him in a thing so contemptible as is his standing up against the Truth of God, to maintain their partiality to the prejudice of their Reputation, which it may be will be kept up among some silly Women, who are seiz'd with a false Persuasion that those Priests speak Truth, when they persuade the People that they are in God's Place.

10. But Men of Sense may easily Judge by this present Treatise that *Burchardus* would have done better to have held his Peace; seeing oftentimes a Fool will be thought a Wise Man when he holds his peace. And *Burchardus* has likewise discovered how little Capacity, Prudence and Virtue he has, in writing a Book so full of Lies, so partial and mean, made up of profane Histories which savour little of Christianity, and are unworthy of a Divine, such as he sets up to be. For all his Histories, may be even literally false, seeing many Historians are wanting in the Truth of what they relate, out of ignorance, or because they would favour the Procedure of some. So that no stress is to be laid upon Authors or Histories; for if the first Writers err, their Successors err likewise in following them. And after this manner Men have become daily worse, by espousing the Errors of others for Truths; and then joining their own mistakes with the preceeding, they must still err the more, and the World grow worse every Day.

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II. But I entreat that those of Quality and Learning may be pleased to examine my Reasoning, and that of *Burchardus* by this *Touch-stone*, without partiality, and with that Understanding that God has given them, and see which of 'em are most valuable; that they may pass a just Judgment without regarding the Barking of those who know not true Virtue, nor the Truth of God: And this will oblige me to own my Self,

Gentlemen,

A most humble Servant

to you all.

Antonia Bourignon.

LETTER IX.

Against a Clergy-man's wresting the Words of Christ, that one must forsake all to be his Disciple. What it is for one to take up his Cross.

S I R,

I. IT is lamentable to see Christians now so blind, that they discern not the Truth of things almost in any matter, and that they take Good for Evil, and Evil for Good. That Preacher of whom you speak in yours is very far from the Truth, when he Preaches, That Christians now ought not to forsake all Things to be the Disciples of Christ; and that those of the Primitive Church were forced to quit all things, because Christ went from place to place, and had no settled Residence where they might abide with their Goods, Wives and Children, &c. if they desired

to follow him to bear his Word: But that now Christians ought not to leave all these things, but to remain in the Possession of them; since when they do this they have God's Word from the Preachers, without leaving their Employ.

2. This is a Doctrine very well fitted for corrupt Nature, which desires nothing but its Ease, its Conveniencies and Pleasures, which one finds in his own Country, among his Relations and Friends, where he is honoured and esteemed, and enjoys his Profits, Ease and Pleasures. And if a Man cou'd with all these things come at last to have eternal Life, this would be agreeable to his Corruption, which desires no other Paradise but the Goods and Pleasures of this World. And without doubt this Preacher gave it satisfaction, by Preaching that a Christian ought not to do any other thing, *nor to leave Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Wife, Children, Lands, Riches, to be the Disciple of Christ.*

3. But it is to be believed that this is the Voice of false Prophets, who speak Peace and Assurance when Danger is near. For what greater Peril can there be than now, when we see Men living in a Forgetfulness of God, and ignorant of the Means how to return to him, every one framing to himself an Idol of his own Inclinations, and placing his Affections thereupon, instead of placing them all upon God, as he has commanded us, (a) *To love him with all our Heart?* We see some set their Love upon their Wealth, others on their Pleasures; this Man upon his Wife, the other upon his Children, Father, Mother, Relations and Friends; upon his House, his Country, pleasing Conversation, and such like. So that a Man's Heart is divided into as many kinds of things as there are different Objects, and is therefore uncapable of loving God with all his Heart, and consequently of attaining to a Life of Eternal Blessedness; since none will be saved but they who die in the Love of God.

4. Wherefore Christ, when he was upon Earth, taught the Christian to leave Father and Mother, Wife and Children, and all Things, to be his Disciple; because he knew that they could not love God above all things without leaving first the natural Love which they bear

(a) *Matth. 22. 37.*

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to all other Things besides God. Therefore he says expressly, that (b) *He who forsakes not Father, Mother, and all things, for his sake, cannot be his Disciple.* But this was not because they needed to leave all those things, that they might follow him from Place to Place; since the Rich do travel as easily as others, yea, and more conveniently, and they could have follow'd him from one Country to another on Horses, or in Chariots, whereas the Poor would have been forced to travel on Foot, in want of all Things; as Christ and his Apostles were fain to take their Necessaries from *Martha, Lazarus,* and other devout Women; yea, even from the *Pharisees* his Enemies, with whom he did often eat and drink.

5. By which we may see that the Christians of the primitive Church had more Reason to keep their Wealth, that they might employ it to serve the Necessities of Christ and his Disciples, than Christians have now, who employ all their Wealth in Sin. And if this Gospel-Counsel of *leaving all things to be the Disciple of Christ,* was given to Christians, for this End only, that they might be free to follow Christ from one Place to another; it had been in vain for the Apostles and Successors of Jesus Christ to make their Disciples also, after the Death of Christ, to leave all, or those who abode in their Houses, and did not personally follow the Apostles; and yet we see in the Scripture how *Ananias and Sapphira* were punish'd for having only conceal'd from St. Peter part of the Money which was the Price of their Land. For both these were struck with sudden Death, and fell down dead at the Apostles Feet for this Concealment, in that they would not faithfully abandon all to be the Disciples of Christ, which was absolutely necessary for the becoming Christians.

6. For otherwise every one might have kept what he had, as St. Peter reproach'd those Two Persons, asking them, *Why they had lied unto the Holy Spirit?* seeing they were free to keep it all, without laying a Part of it at the Apostles Feet, provided they had not said that they would be Christians. Which is a certain Evidence, that to be a Christian, one was obliged then to abandon all, and that to be a true Christian now a-days, one must do

(b) *Luke 14. 26,*

what was to be done in the Primitive Church ; seeing God is to Day and Yesterday the same, and the Gospel will never be changed. The Counsels which Christ gave unto his Disciples, he gives, and still will give, to all Christians, even to the End of the World ; seeing the Scripture continues still to speak.

7. But those new Divines interpreting the Scriptures for their Advantage, wrest them according to the Looseness of their Manners ; and because they themselves are wedded to their Conveniencies, their Pleasures and Profits, they cannot preach otherwise (without contradicting their own Actions) than *that a Christian may continue in the Possession of all that he has, without being obliged to leave any thing* : And though this be an Antichristian Doctrine, contrary to that of Christ and his Gospel, which speaks of nothing but Poverty of Spirit, and forsaking all Things to be the Disciple of Christ, yea, of denying one's self, and of hating his own Soul, saying, (c) *He that saves his Life shall lose it ; and he that loses his Life for my Love, the same shall find it* : Yet this Preacher gives his Hearers to understand, that they must not lose the least of their Goods to be the Disciples of Christ !

8. It is of him, and such as he is, that the Scripture speaks to the People, *Your Guides are Seducers* ; and it is of those that the Prophet says, (d) *That they sow Pillows to all Arm-holes, to make them rest softly in their Sins*. And if God of his great Mercy has discover'd unto you his Light of Truth, do not hearken unto such Preachers, who seek more their own Glory and Advantage, than the Salvation of your Soul. Rest upon the Gospel-Counsels, if you would become a true Christian, and have no Regard to the Glosses made by Men, each after his own Way, though without the Knowledge of the Truth, which is God.

9. As to your Opinion concerning *taking up the Cross and following Christ*, and what you say of *the Afflictions that happen to you by the Loss of your Relations, by Sicknes, and other Tribulations that befall you* ; your Sentiment is not founded upon Truth, seeing to *take up the Cross*,

(c) *Matth. 16. 25.* (d) *Ezek. 13. 18.*

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and to follow him, is quite another thing : For Men themselves do not *take up* these Tribulations and Crosses, but both the Good and the Wicked are obliged to bear them *by Force*, though they have no mind to be the Disciples of Christ ; because Sin has subjected all Mankind to Tribulations, Persecutions and Sufferings, from which neither Heathens nor Christians can be exempted. Wherefore the Gospel cannot say, that *He who would be the Disciple of Christ must deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow him*, to any but to those who desire to be the true Disciples of Christ, and not to those who of Necessity, because of Sin, must suffer the Adversities that befall them ; seeing these do not all aim to be the Disciples of Christ. But the Scripture speaks expressly in this Text, that (e) *He who would be Christ's Disciple must deny himself* ; that is to say, all the Motions and Inclinations of corrupt Nature ; embracing all that shocks or contradicts this Corruption.

10. And this is what the Apostle says, *That our Life is a continual Warfare* ; and what the Scripture says, (f) *That Flesh and Blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven* ; because Nature being entirely corrupted by Sin, can never do any Good, nor become the Disciple of Christ, bear his Cross, and follow him, without a supernatural Light and Grace, which is not given to all those who have natural Afflictions and Crosses, as the Loss of Relations, of Wealth, of Health, or other casual Inconveniencies. But Men are fallen into so profound Ignorance, that they do not at all understand the real Sense of the Truths of God : And every one imagines that he understands Things after his Way, though Men now do not understand the Truth even of Natural Things.

11. My Meaning was not, that you ought not any longer to visit the Sick, nor to administer the Remedies that you believe to be good for them ; but only that it is dangerous for Physicians to give strong Medicines to their Patients ; because they do not understand Diseases, nor the Constitution of natural Bodies. Therefore I advise you to appoint for your Patients a good Course of Life and Diet, rather than other Medicines. And I be-

(e) *Matth. 16. 24.* (f) *1 Cor. 15. 50.*

lieve that even the very Nature of the Sick will discern better what is fit for them than the Physician. It is better therefore to follow it, than to force it : And when a sick Person enclines to sweat, give him some Cordial that may warm him a little more, that by this means the Disease may evaporate through the Pores of all the Body by Sweating. And if the sick Person enclines to Rest, do not keep him awake to make him eat; seeing Sleep doth nourish him. And when the sick Person enclines to vomit, or to purge of himself, give him only some strengthening Nourishment, and let Nature help it self by the Ways which it chuseth. And by these means you can do no Hurt in continuing to visit the Sick, since this must serve for your Maintenance.

12. But if God do enlighten you more, and make you resolve to leave the World, to become only the Physician of your Soul, in labouring to cure all its Maladies, you will be far more happy. This she assures you, who loves the same Soul, to render it unto God.

Novemb. 8.
1675.

Antonia Bourignon.

L E T T E R X.

When God causes the Truth to be publish'd, which he communicates to a holy Soul, the Devil stirs up corrupt Men to counterfeit the Works of God.

S I R,

I Perceived by your's, of the 24th of November, the Desire you have to labour for God's Honour, and to print my Writings, even at your own Charges; which I will not oppose, since you say, you have employ'd too much Wealth in the Service of the Devil, and you desire now to employ it in the Service of God. I approve your Resolution, and hope it may repair all the Excesses you have committed in the Service of the World, and to please it. And I doubt not but this useful Employ will warm your Heart in the Love of God; seeing this Do-

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arine is the Living Bread that descends from Heaven; which the Catholicks attribute to the Holy Supper, because they know no better.

2. I judged that my Originals would be fitter for this Impression than any Copies or Translations; therefore I will entrust them to you, and send you one Sheet at once in our Letters by the Post. You may begin to print them, when you have received Three Sheets; because the rest will follow Sheet by Sheet sufficiently to employ the Press. To me it seems best (with Submission) to print first *Solid Virtue* in French, which will agree with the Project you send me in the Preface to the *Touch-stone*; to which I have nothing to oppose: For its Language is very good; and if any ambiguous Word occur, you may look into the *New Testament*, translated by the *Jansenists*, who have very good French and Orthography, without Novelties, as the *Labadists* have, who please me in nothing, and are like the Magicians in *Moses's* Time, that counterfeited all the Works of God.

3. I am troubled therefore to be compar'd to such Persons, who would counterfeit the Works of God, as *Rothé* does, and so many others, who affirm falsely, that they are sent to restore *Israel*; seeing in order to do this they have in no wise the Spirit of God, but are all full of the Love of themselves, and seek their own Glory: Which cannot agree with the Spirit of God, who is all humble, sincere and true; whereas those *Labadists* and others are subtle, dissembling and proud. In which respect our Times may well be call'd dangerous and unhappy for those who do not know the solid Truth which God communicates unto you by my Writings, of which you ought never to doubt.

4. For there is no other God, but he who governs me; nor other Truths but those which he teaches me. You may therefore leave all other things, and rely on the Truths which I write, since they can be none other but what proceeds from God. For *all Men are Liars* (g), saith the Scripture, as I would be likewise if I spoke of my self; which I dare not do, knowing that I proceed from the corrupt Mass of *Adam*, as do all the rest of Men: But what

(g) *Rom.* 3. 4.

I say from God is true ; and I never deceived any Body.

5. You may therefore believe me ; for you will find that my Saying is true, and that in me there is no Falshood, since God gave me the Grace to overcome corrupt Nature, which you have not as yet overcome, nor S. nor M. ** You are all yet in the Warfare of this Corruption ; but I hope you shall at last obtain the Victory ; for which my Writings may serve you for Armour, to repulse the Stroaks which the Enemy of your Soul's Salvation gives you. Plant them therefore in your Heart : And if you have the Courage to despise humane Respects, declare your self boldly to be a Friend of the Truths of God which I advance. But if you fear that you have not Courage enough to suffer the Contempt of ignorant Men, keep it secret.

Novemb. 25.

1675.

LETTER XI.

The Church shall not be re-established by the Learned, who are in the Confusion of Babel. The Slavery of corrupt Nature.

My Child,

1. **BY** your Letter of the 3d of March I perceive, that *Lodestein* and his Adherents have a good Opinion of the State of the World, and of Men ; but I am afraid they take not the right Way of profiting to Salvation : For to think to convert the World by Clergy-men, is to beat the Air and lose Time, seeing they are the Cause of the Corruption of Christendom, having taught the People Falshoods for Truth, and Errors instead of true Virtue. This the ignorant People receive for Christian Truths, though there appears nothing of a Christian in the Preachers themselves : And they cannot give to others that which they have not themselves.

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2. And therefore it is not to be hoped, that the Re-establishment of the Church of God will be done by the Priests. It will be much if any of them be converted: For they are generally so ambitious, that they will not receive the Truths of God from those who have not been bred in Universities, though Christ says, *(h) That he will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and abolish the Prudence of the Prudent*: And elsewhere he says, *(i) He makes use of the Things that are weak to confound the Strong.*

3. But those Scholars invert the Sense of the Scripture, and act quite contrary to what Christ taught us; and yet they say, they are *Ambassadors from God*, which is not true. Wherefore you must not amuse your self with those Preachers, who are too wise in themselves, and account their Follies and Errors to be Wisdom and Truth. It were better to employ one's Time in teaching either those who submit to the Will of God, or who seek after the Truth, and hunger and thirst after Righteousness.

4. These are the Children of the Kingdom, but they who believe they are wise know nothing: And Christ has told us, *(k) That we must not give the Childrens Bread to Dogs.* I am apt to think that this *Lodestein* is not a Child subject to the Eternal Father as he ought; but that he sees only in a Speculative way the Corruption of Men, and that there are no Christians any longer; but that he does not labour to become one, and contents himself with the despising of others.

5. This is a good Beginning to know Evil, but the great Point is to abandon it, and to embrace the true Good, which these Men do not yet understand. They are only full of good Desires, without advancing any further. The best you can afford them, is to acquaint them with my Writings, in which are contain'd the Truths of God, and the Ways which lead to Eternal Life. And I am certain there is no other Way of Salvation, than that which God has taught me, and that every one may perceive by this Doctrine if he is far from, or near unto the Kingdom of Heaven; which cannot be discern'd by the Doctrine of Men, who are assuredly full of the *Babel of Confusion and Ignorance.*

(h) 1 Cor. I. 19. *(i)* Ibid. v. 27. *(k)* Matth. 6. I
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6. I am come to *Hambourg*, that I may have the Leisure to answer a Book writ by Mr. *Ouw*, Preacher in *Flensburg*, whom you know. I intend to dedicate my Answer to the King, to let him see the great Injury which those Preachers and the Magistrates of the Town did in treating you in such a manner, and casting such a Reproach upon me. They say, this Preacher repents that he wrote against me, and that they conspire all together to have me banish'd out of *Holstein*, or discharged to write any more; but I hope they shall be deceived, and shall not compass their Design: For as soon as my Answers are publish'd, they will be shamefully baffled, as they have well deserv'd.

7. Our President labours to have the *Touch-stone* printed: He is at *Copenhagen*, and has gain'd the King's Favour, as it is said; which would be for our Advantage... The Duke gave Orders a long time ago, that my Press and Books should be return'd me, but they who have 'em in Custody detain 'em from me, and disperse 'em. Secretary N. and the Preachers are our Adversaries, and oppose our Good. I know not if God will permit 'em to domineer yet for some time to try our Patience. He is to be blest for all... There are some here who would fain speak with me for the Edification of their Souls; but I dare not adventure it, till I know how I stand with the King. If he afford me Safety, I would retire for some time to *Altena*..... I was much rejoiced to see our Brother S. It is a Loss that his Wife is so contrary to him: He would flie thro' the whole World if he were not wedded to her. O how strong a Chain is Marriage to withdraw Men from God! God preserve all well-meaning Souls from it, that they may have the Liberty to flie wherever God shall be pleas'd to call 'em. A. is here at *Hambourg*, with very good Inclinations, but it seems he has not the Courage to overcome humane Respects. He lodges in the *French Ordinary*, eats with the Ladies, and other People of the World. He goes often with Company to take the Air in Coach. I have bid him withdraw, and live rather meanly in my Lodging. He says, He has not Resolution enough to leave his Lodging while he stays at *Hambourg*; and that he would chuse rather to go and stay with our Brother *Tiellens* at *Sleswick*. I leave him at Liberty to do as he pleases: For I see he has Strugglings. He weeps when

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Lett. XII. *Builders of Babel.*

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he speaks of the Lodging in which he is, and he has not the Courage to leave it. Which shews, that the Law of corrupt Nature is a Slavery, that constrains a Man to that which he would not.

8. I pray God preserve you from that Slavery, and make you overcome that brutal Part of Concupiscence, that you may become one truly renew'd in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*. In this Wish I continue

At *Hambourg*,
Apr. 8. 1676.

Your Mother in *Jesus Christ*,

A. B.

L E T T E R. XII.

The Learned find Faults in the Works which come from God, and they do not observe, that they themselves cannot re-establish nor reform any thing but after the confused Manner of the Builders of Babel.

S I R,

1. I Received all your Letters with the Enclosed, and I have return'd an Answer to ** ; but I could not read M. P's Letter, because of the Smalness of the Character, and the Paleness of the Ink ; for I have never yet made use of Spectacles. I have sent it to our Brethren at *Sleswick*, that they may copy out the Letter, and return it to me. I know not likewise who that M. is, for I never heard of him. But if they seek after the Truth of God, they will find it in my Writings. They may read more of them ; for Truth is of that Nature, that the more nearly it is view'd, the more beautiful we find it.

2. I saw what M. wrote concerning me, by which he shews, that he is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. But he has not yet received that Light of Truth, which God sends now upon Earth. Yet I believe he is one of the best of this Age, and that he thinks there are yet many Christians upon Earth, of whom he hopes to be one. But if you ask him, Whether he lives as the Christians of the Primitive Church did ? He would be obliged to answer, That he does not ; though God ne-

ver changes. That Men may be Christians, it is, and ever will be needful that they lead a Gospel-Life ; which none do, while yet there are so many who reckon themselves Christians out of Ignorance, not knowing what is needful to make a true Christian. M. does very well to commend the Resolution you have taken to be virtuous, and to follow the Life and Doctrine of Christ and of his Apostles, since no body can blame this. All Christians must approve it.

3. But that which he finds fault with in my Book, *That all the modern Theology contradicts the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit*, is the best and most true of all my Assertions, and I have met with many good Divines who have acknowledged this Truth : For all that is now taught in Theology are the Glosses of Men, who have not the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit ; and the Fault he finds with my Saying, *That Disputes come from the Devil*, is nothing but imaginary : Since it appears by the Effect, that Charity is banish'd from among Christians by the Means of Disputes. For since they began to dispute, Hatred has prevail'd among them, instead of that Love which Jesus Christ so earnestly recommended to them. And as the Tree is known by its Fruit, Disciples also are known by what they have produced. And so long as Mr. ** will rake Counsel from the Learned of this World, he can never receive the Light of the Holy Spirit, as he would do of himself ; because the Learned will never approve of that which does not serve for their Designs or Advantages, since the Humility and Poverty of *Jesus Christ* is in Contempt with them, as it was with the *Greeks* in his own Time.

4. As to his Thought, that *I am proud*, and that I call my self, *The Mother of Christians*, you must answer him, *That this concerns none but my self* ; and that if my Doctrine be good, they cannot err in following it, even though it had been advanced by the Devil himself : And there can be no Poison hid in the Doctrine and Practice of the Gospel, at which all my Words and Writings aim, and what I advance further, every one is free to let it alone, and to take that only which he finds to be good, according to the Counsel of *Jesus Christ*, (1) *To try the Spirits, and*

(1) 1 John 4. 1.

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to hold to that which is good, and reject the evil : Which I cannot say of my Writings, since they have nothing in them that is evil, to be rejected. It is fit only for one to suspend his Judgment as to what he cannot comprehend, till it please God to give him a sufficient Understanding of it.

5. The other Points alledged by ** are Calumnies and Lies : For I do not in the least despise the Holy Scripture : On the contrary, I perswade every one to read it, and to follow what it teaches. But the Fruits of this Reading do appear sufficiently in the Lives of those who read it continually, and yet are not converted ; nor yet they who daily hear Sermons, and what they call *God's Word*. They ought to be edified by the Goodness of God, who gives yet at present in this wretched Age his Light of Truth immediately, and that I need no other Master but the Holy Spirit.

6. Wherefore you may ask those Doctors, if the Holy Spirit is limited, or become barren now, that he can no more give to any his immediate Light, as he did heretofore to so many holy Prophets ? And if he is now subjected to Learned *Rabbies*, who cannot give to another what they have not themselves, while they would foolishly explain the Scriptures by the Means of their Learning, by which they acquire nothing but the Sentiments of others ? And if that other has err'd, he who follows him, doth err likewise, having no other Light but what he derives from his Books, which being false, the Doctrine he learns from them is false likewise. Lo, these are all the Sciences of the Men of Learning.

7. That my Writings are *more clear and intelligible than even the Scriptures*, one needs but examine them narrowly, to see if this is not true. I have also good Ground to slight the Reformation of the Church of *Rome*, when I see that they who have made that Reformation live worse than others, having fallen from some Errors into far greater : So that what is alledged by those Divines deserves no Refutation, being ill founded, false and unreasonable. It were much better to abide firm in the Resolution of following the Life and Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, than to spend one's Time in answering such Trifles. For such, for the most part, do not so much seek to find out the Truth, as to find

what may serve to establish their Authority, or to maintain their Opinions, and what they have resolved to believe. . . .

8. I am well pleased that your Translation is finish'd. There are many who long for that Treatise; and I believe 'tis the Devil that retards it; as also *Solid Virtue*, for which they have writ several times from *Copenhagen*, the Nobility there being desirous of it. If I had the *Touchstone* in High-Dutch, I would distribute it here before I leave this Place, where there are many curious Persons, who desire it, and among those the Duke of *Holstein* himself: In his Retreat he would pass his Time in reading it. I am well pleased that you are not so averse to the Invocation of Saints as formerly; for it is a very ill thing to admit such Prejudices against any thing, as to be incapable of receiving the Truth.

9. All these Reformations have brought great Mischief into Christendom; and it had been far better to have continued in the *Roman* Church, and reform'd the Corruptions of it, than to have made so many unprofitable Schisms and Divisions. I think all the Reform'd have fallen out of the Frying-pan into the Fire, and instead of reforming Christendom, have deform'd it yet more; and Peoples Manners are become far worse than before the Reformation; and they have encreased in Evil: For by it Charity is entirely frozen, and Hatred is encreased, so as to kill and despise one another; and from Christian Brethren they are become Enemies to one another, hate one another with deadly Hatred for some ill founded Opinions, and for these they despise one another; and the one holds that for Error which the other esteems Virtue.

10. By which we see the *Confusion* that was figured by the *Tower of Babel*, whose *Builders* did not understand one another; which made the Work to be left off, as we see now Christians cease to advance in Virtue, that they may fight against one another about the Things which do not concern their Salvation: For what Advancement or Hindrance is it to Virtue, to believe that we ought to pray to the Saints, or that we ought not to pray to them? Since this is not of the Essence of Faith, and they who do sincerely address them as the Favourites of the Court of Hea-

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Heaven, do well ; and they who pray immediately unto God with Humility of Heart, do well also : For every one is obliged to seek the Means that are most proper for the Advancement of his Perfection. All Persons do not go by the same Way unto God : Some by Prayers, others by Fasting, others by Meditation, others by succouring their Neighbour, and so by a Thousand other Means fitted to each one. Therefore the Apostle says, *That a Man must not grieve his Brother ; (m) that he who eats, eats unto the Lord ; and he who fasts, fasts unto the Lord.* As David said heretofore, *(n) Let all Spirits praise the Lord, both in Heaven and on Earth.* Why then do Christians now a-days mock one another for their Devotions ? For my part I would not mock at the Devotion of the Turks or Heathens, when they go about it sincerely, and think they do well in it. And I believe it will be found at the Day of Judgment, that some Heathens have served God better in their Ignorance, than many Christians who mock them. Be assured of this from

Hambourg, May 16.

1676.

A. B.

(m) *Rem.* 14.6, (n) *Psal.* 150.6.

LETTER XIII.

How far the several Parties of Religion are estranged from Truth and Virtue; and how they ought to recover the same.

S I R,

1. **I** Received yours in due time, but it being writ in a small Character, and with pale Ink, I could not read it. I sent it to our Friends at *Sleswick* to copy it out, by which Copy I understood its Contents, the Favours which God had shew'd you, and your holy Resolutions, the Truth you have discover'd in my Writings, and your Desire to follow it. All which Things are much to be regarded as particular Favours, to which you must continue faithful. For there is no other Way of Salvation, than that of following the Truth of God in Practice.

2. But this Truth is now so darken'd by Mens Comments and Explanations, that one knows not where to find it. Every one says (o) *Lo here is Christ, Lo there is Christ*, while in the mean time we see not any of the Parties of Religion embracing the Lowliness and Humility of Christ, nor living as did the Primitive Christians. All of them are as remote from this, as Earth is from Heaven; tho' each of them believe they are good, and that they live as Christians; and do not perceive that they are *Anti-Christians*, and that their Lives are directly opposite to the Lives of the Primitive Christians: And yet the Life of a Christian now a-days ought to be wholly conformable thereunto, since God is Yesterday and to Day the same; and there will never be any other saving Doctrine, than that which *Jesus Christ* has taught: He came at the last Hour, and therefore we must not look for any Change, nor for any other Way of Salvation, than what he and his Apostles left us in the Doctrine of the Gospel.

(o) *Matt. 24. 23.*

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3. And because I declare by my Writings those Truths which God makes known to me, they reproach, pursue and persecute me beyond Measure; and they call by the Name of *Heresies* the most solid Truths which God doth immediately teach me. For I never gave my self to Study, nor Reading, nor Speculative Meditations. I exercise my self in purifying my Soul, and following the Counsels of the Gospel; and by this means God communicates unto my Soul what he thinks fit I should know, and I impart it to others as much as I can, without any other Recompence but Contempt and Persecutions.

4. You tell me in yours, that some of those to whom you recommended my Writings, had several Doubts and Objections about them, to which you answer'd pertinently, when you said, That spiritual Writings do operate, according to the Disposition of the Souls who read them. You may publish as you see fit all your Answers. For my part, I have no Concern therein, since I am not sollicitous that People should believe me. I have done the Duty that God requires of me, by imparting to my Neighbour the Light of Truth that he gives me. Every one is free to embrace or reject it, since all the Damage or Profit will be their own: And I aim at nothing in the World but to accomplish the Will of God.

5. I withdraw as much as I can from Men, even from those who pass for *devout Persons*; and I can see nothing of true Religion among them, whatever they may call it: All seems nothing to me but a Traffick and *Merchandise of Souls*. I have only Seven Persons with me, who have abandon'd the World to become the Disciples of Christ; and they have not as yet attain'd to what they aim at: They endeavour with the Apostle to see if they can attain to it. Wherefore I cannot advise you to come and see them, and I am not at present with them, we being scatter'd in divers Places, because of Persecutions, though we are all united in the Desire of becoming true Christians.

6. I hope we shall ere long come together again. If it is all one to you, with those Two you speak of, where you stay; you may live cheap at *Sleswick*, where you may sometimes converse with us, and see more of my Writings, which come abroad daily, like a Fountain that never dries up. For I counsel none to enter into our Society,

ciety before they are convinced in every thing; otherwise the Devil would put into their Minds, Doubts and Scruples, to make them backslide. It were better for Men to try themselves well before they undertake a Thing to which Nature has great Repugnance; since we daily fight against it, and do not place Virtue in fine Speculations, eloquent Discourses, or curious Theories: But we place it (as you also have observ'd) in the Mortification of the Flesh, and in the Imitation of Jesus Christ.

7. They who would be saved by any other Way, need not come to me; for I know no other Way that leads to Salvation. I apprehend you may be one of *Labadie's* Disciples. If so, you must know that I am not of his Sentiments, and will not embrace them. It would be therefore in vain for you to come to persuade me to it; for I have another Master, who teaches me to do quite otherwise than they do. And some while ago they wrote to me from *Hambourg*, to know if I would receive into our Society some of *Labadie's* Disciples? To which I answer'd, No; since God taught me otherwise than he teaches his Disciples. I knew him and his Doctrine and Works. I also perceived he had some with him who sought for Virtue where it was not to be found. Such would be welcome to me, if they would come to learn the Instructions of the Holy Spirit, and to unlearn what they have learned from natural Men, from whom nothing but Errors and Lies can proceed; for all Nature is corrupted, from which nothing but Sin can flow, so long as Men follow this Corruption.

8. I must end, because the Post goes off, and I have had little Time since I received your Second Letter. We may enlarge more upon this afterwards. In Expectation of this, I remain to you and your dear Spouse,

Hambourg, May 19. 1676. Your very Affectionate in J. Christ,

Antonia Bourignon,

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LETTER XIV.

They who seek God purely are few in Number, and persecuted by those who have nothing but Words, as it is in all the Parties.

SIR,

1. I Perceive you can read my Letters, and that my first is agreeable to you. I would write more unto you, but seeing I find by yours, that you intend to come shortly into these Parts, I hope to tell you by Word of Mouth what I have to write to you. If in Eight Days you leave *Holland*, I hope you shall find me here. I rejoice to hear that there are yet some who do purely seek God; but I dare not trust all those who say they do this; because I have met with so many Cheats, that I know not whom to trust.

2. We are only Five Persons in Society together, who have dedicated Body and Goods to the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Salvation of Souls: They are yet weak and imperfect in true Virtue; but constant and invincible in their Resolutions of labouring to become true Christians. I assist and comfort them, as much as I can; and this I would do without Partiality to all well-disposed Persons. I would gladly bestow upon them for these Ends all my Goods and my Life, that I might bring them nearer unto God. If you seek after this, I will love you with all my Heart; but if you seek after any other thing, you will not find it with me. For though I am nothing but a Child in Sincerity, God has been pleased to give me much Light, whereby to discern Falshood from Truth when I need to know it; so that if you are upright in Heart, you will undoubtedly find with me what you seek for.

3. But if you come hither (as many have done) out of Curiosity, or for a Spy, your Stay will not be long. Hence many have gone away after they had come to live with me; because *their Eye being evil, their whole Body remain'd in Darknes*, as the Scripture says; but if *their*

their Eye had been single, their whole Body had been full of Light.

4. I know not what you can do better than to dedicate your self to God, that he may do with you as it pleaseth him, since this is both the most perfect Way, and that which is most acceptable to him. For even the Virtues that we chuse are sometimes the Effects of our Self-love; but the abandoning of our Will to that of God can never be amiss. This Path doth certainly lead to Eternal Blessedness. And if I can in any wise assist you in this Way, I am wholly yours: If my Writings can strengthen you in it, I will never refuse you These. Here you may read my Treatise, called, *The Word of God*, if it is useful for you, and the other Treatises which you want; yea, you may partake of the new Light which God doth daily impart unto me, in case you abide near to the Place of my Residence.

5. I hope God will give me one Day a fix'd Place of Residence, where all his Children may meet, and be refresh'd with the Mother. But his Enemies do hinder this Quiet as much as they can. Perhaps we need yet to be purged by Persecutions, It matters little where we are, provided we be in the Will of God our Father. It should be all one to us, whether he chuse to see us in Prosperity or Persecution, provided we be what we are, according to his Will.

6. I am convinced that you are not of *Labadie's* Party. I was told, that some of them are divided: And sometime ago it was written to me, that some of them desir'd to join with me; which I then declin'd, because they give out that they are all guided by *King JESUS*; which I look upon as a great Presumption of Spirit: For I knew him and his Doctrine, and there observed no such thing: And if this were true, there would be no need of their Coming to reside with me; for he who is govern'd by *King Jesus* is well wherever he is, and has no need to change Places. But he who feels in his Soul that *King Jesus* has not the full Dominion over it, ought to seek all Means that may let him have this absolute Dominion. And if my Writings or Conversation be an Help to any, they ought to love and seek after it as much as they can, since every one is obliged to seek the Means of his own Perfection; for without the Means we can never

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never arrive at the End. I know there are some well-meaning People among the *Labadists*; but I am afraid it would be hard for them to quit the first Impressions which he gave them. He forbade them so much as to read my Writings. I know not what they have written against me; but I may easily judge what Sentiments they have; for I have entirely discover'd, that they are only a new Sect invented by the Wit of Men, who seek to drive a Trade with the Word of God.

7. God has granted you a great Favour in making you discern Good from Evil. This is no small Favour in so dangerous a Time, where every one says, *Here or there is Christ*, while in Life and Practice Christ is not truly follow'd any where. Wherefore I do not inform my self of what Party of Religion those are who desire to join with me, provided they will follow *Jesus Christ*, and deny themselves; since all those Sects and Religions, by what Name soever they may call them, are nothing but a Trade. I see none of them led by the Holy Spirit, though each Sect pretends to found it self upon the Scriptures. But all is ill interpreted, and yet worse follow'd.

Wherefore we must cleave to the *Doctrine of Christ*, and endeavour to put it in Practice. This is the only Way to live happy to all Eternity; which Happiness I wish you and your Company, being,

S I R,

Hambourg, May
26. 1676.

Your very Affectionate in J. Christ,

Ant. Bourignon.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

That it is not fit to seek after Persons, for fear of being deceived, or of rearing up humane, unprofitable and hurtful Buildings.

My Child,

I. I Received yours from *Amsterdam*, and that also from *Rotterdam* of the 22d of *July*, by which I perceive you have done what I recommended to you when you was at *Amsterdam*, for which I thank you. As to the Maid you saw at *Leiden*, who had a great Appearance of Sanctity, you are not to lay Stress upon it. You must recommend those extraordinary Things to God, before you believe any of them, since we live in so dangerous a Time, in which God reveals, that Three Parts of the Men of the whole Earth are in expresse Covenant with the Devil. Consider what Danger there is in conversing with 'em now. And if you knew what Appearance of Sanctity the Devil makes use of in such Persons for seducing well-meaning Men, you would be more jealous of this seeming Holiness, or these extraordinary things, than you would be of open Sinners, who can't do such Mischief to your Soul, as those counterfeited Saints, who deceive even the best disposed Persons. You say, this Maid told you the Discourse you had held with another in her Absence, and this confirms you in the Opinion that she has Revelations from God: But you do not consider that the Devil may reveal such Things to his Adherents. I have had so much Experience of the like Things, that I am afraid of all, till I am confirm'd by God, if those things are from him, or from an evil Spirit. I knew Persons at *Amsterdam*, who did the Things that you tell me of that Maid, and spoke of the Wonders of God like Angels, and yet were truly Sorcerers; which many did perceive, after that I had once made them suspect it, and they had more narrowly observ'd them.

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2. Wherefore I'm afraid you may let your self be seduced by such false Appearances. Do not seek after extraordinary Things. Lay hold on Solid Virtue, the denying of your self, the entire abandoning of your Will unto God, that you may let your self be govern'd by him in all his Ways. This is the one Thing needful for your Salvation; but Visions or Prophecies are not so, nor yet to know what you say to others in the Absence of those who pretend to prophesie: Since these things bring no Perfection to the Soul of him who does them; but a great Péril of Vain-glory, when he is not regenerated.

3. I know you have a great Zeal and Desire to advance the Glory of God; but you take not the right Way to do it. You think to convert the World by Spiritual Admonitions or Discourses; but that is not the Way that God has chosen to do this. He himself must build the Temple, *That shall not be made by Mens Hands*, where *Righteousness shall dwell*, and where Men shall no longer need to teach one another (m), but they shall be all taught of God. To me this Time seems to be at hand, when there shall be no longer need to preach or travel for the Conversion of Men. God's Judgments will chase the Good to the Place where they ought to be, and will cut off the Wicked, that the Earth may be purged from them.

4. Wherefore I dissuade you from that Employ of compassing Sea and Land to make a Profelyte; but I advise you to apply seriously to your own Perfection, that you may in Quiet labour to find Communion with God. Then shall you be capable of converting all those who shall be disposed for true Conversion: Which now by your outward Means you cannot do. God must work in the Souls of Men of good Will. All the outward things which lead to God have now lost their Force, by reason of Mens Abuse of them: The Sacraments have no more Virtue: Sermons resemble Comedies: Prayers and other Devotions are done by Rote, or out of Self-Complacency. In short, the Time is come (n) *That God must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, and no longer in*

(m) Jer. 31. 34. Isa. 54. 13. (n) John 4. 21, 23.

the Temple, or upon the Mountain; that is to say, in material Temples, or Forms of Devotion.

5. For the Holy Spirit is no longer obtain'd by Assemblies, Congregations, Reformations, Sermons, or other outward Forms of Worship; but by Purity of Life, and the Renouncing of corrupt Nature: Not by speaking well, or having the Gift of Prophecy, or that of working Miracles, or by giving all our Goods to feed the Poor; but by *Charity*, as the Apostle declares, telling us, That all is nothing without *Charity*, which is the Love of God; for to possess this, and for no other End were we created: So that all that we do and say ought to aim at no other End but to attain this Love of God. Wherefore we ought to mind this one Thing, without taking too much Liberty about other Things, or seeking to convert others before we are well converted our selves.

6. I know that all Men of Good-will, being touch'd inwardly in their Souls by God, would fain give the same Impression unto others, and would go over Sea and Land to declare the Blessing which they have received, that they might make their Neighbour Partaker of the same, and bring him to be converted, as they think they themselves are. But they do not perceive that there are yet so many dangerous Ways to pass through, where the Devil waits to deprive them of the good Motions that God has put into the Soul: Which will be lost, unless they have a good Guide, who has Experience of the Wiles of the Devil, which are so subtle for Beginners, that it is impossible to discover them, because they are cover'd over with Piety and Virtue; so that those Beginners do not distinguish false Piety and Virtue from that which is true and solid; and by this means they wander, and go out of themselves by indiscreet Zeal, going where they are not sent, and desiring to impart to others that which they have not yet acquired themselves.

7. I even gave Way to this Temptation in the Beginning of my Conversion; not that I went out of my self to teach others, since I never had that Ambition; but I went out of my self to do many good Works (as I believed;) such as to visit the Sick, to comfort the Afflicted, and to do other Works of bodily and spiritual Mercy:

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So that I did not omit any of the Town of *Lisle*, who was in Necessity, whom I knew, and whom it was in my Power to help. I used also by Course a great Number of Prayers, Watchings, Fastings and Penances, which would have soon made an End of me, if God had not miraculously preserv'd me, who afterwards made me see that all those things were done from an indiscreet and rash Zeal, wherein Self-pleasing mingled it self to my Hurt. For the Care I had of the poor sick Prisoners, and of those who were persecuted, was an Hindrance to my inward Recollection, and no Advantage to the Souls of others, who reap'd only some humane Comfort thereby, and that many times to the Prejudice of their Salvation; since I found that the Use that many made of the good Offices I did them, was to offend God the more, and to live in Sloth, Gluttony and Drunkenness, by my Liberality to them; So that I was constrain'd by the Divine Light to quit all those outward Virtues, that I might not any longer co-operate with the Sins of others. I desired earnestly to have more Care of their Souls than of their Bodies, and took them into my House, that I might see what Use they made of the good Offices I did them, while I endeavour'd to instruct them in the Christian Doctrine, and in those things which made for their Salvation. And I applied my self for about Nine Years to this Bodily and Spiritual Hospitality both together, thinking thereby to gain some Soul to God: But I can say truly, that not one of all the Persons whom I received into my House, which were to the Number of about Five Hundred, gave Evidence of being converted unto God. They were well taught, and knew the Way of Salvation; but they did not follow it. So that I might say with St. Peter, (o) *Lord, I have fish'd all Night, and have caught nothing.* I was fain to cast my Net on the other Side, as the Lord shew'd me: Then I saw the Net full of Fishes.

8. I wish, my Child, you may become wise at my Expence, and give over the Desire of seeking for holy Men, or such as you hope to convert; since you will find neither, but will hinder your own Salvation without profiting others. This is the only and last Mean which God

(o) *Luke 5. 5.*

will make Use of to cause the Gospel of the Kingdom to be preach'd through the World by Writing: And if you would contribute thereunto, you need not pass over into *England*; you have already found what you would seek there. The Sickneſs that has ſeized you in the Way may let you ſee that this Voyage was not approv'd of God, no more than I approv'd it: But whereas you were free, I reſolv'd to leave you in that Liberty in which God himſelf hath left you. Return now, and ſee if you can do any thing in the Will of God, and do not any longer follow your own Will, which is wholly corrupted. This ſhe affures you,

Lutzbourg in Eaſt-Frieſeland,
Aug. 21. 1677.

Who loves your Soul,

A. B.

LETTER XVI.

On the ſame Subject.

My Child,

1. **I** Received both your Letters, the laſt on the 18th of *September*, but I could not answer you, being ſo weaken'd by a Sickneſs, which has laſted Five Weeks; and I am not yet free of the Fever, which encreaſes every Day in the Evening, with an Overflowing of the Gall that ſpreads it ſelf into the Stomach. This has ſo weaken'd and chang'd me, that Mr. L. C. and Mr. T. when they came here were troubled to ſee me. I have been at the Gates of Death; but it ſeems God will not open them yet to me. He knows beſt why. His holy Name be bleſt, for he does all things for our greater Good. I hope it will happen ſo to you alſo as to your Sickneſs. But I am afraid that the Devil may make you believe, that the Drink is the Cauſe of your Sickneſs, as you tell me in yours, of which I cannot be perſwaded, but rather that it is a Favour from God, who by this means will have you to know his Will as to your Voyage to *England*, and your other Enterprizes.

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2. For I know from God, that he will no longer convert Men by the Means which you undertake, as I wrote in my last; but that he himself will touch the Heart, and leave each to seek the most proper Means for his own Perfection. This you cannot comprehend, and you think you have more Reason than I to do what you judge to be good. And this happens to you for want of Light, and a particular Revelation from God, to whom you are not entirely resign'd; but you are yet guided by your own Spirit; and thereby the Devil endeavours to ensnare you without your perceiving it.

3. Thus he treats all good Men, seeking to catch them under a Pretext of Piety and good Works. Wherefore the Scripture saith by Jesus Christ, (p) *What will it profit a Man to gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* But the Devil and corrupt Nature do still excite well-meaning Persons to go abroad out of themselves, and to draw others to Virtue before they have attain'd to it themselves, that they may thus make them lose their Souls by Wandring and Distraction, without bringing any Profit to others; and thus their Labours are vain and fruitless.

4. I perceiv'd by yours, that these Admonitions were not agreeable to you; and having recommended it to God, I was press'd to write to you once more, because of the Danger in which I see you. In the mean time, think not that I say this to you out of a Desire to have you to stay with me, since I am absolutely resolv'd not to receive you into our Company till you are entirely convinced in your Soul that I am govern'd by the Holy Spirit, and till you are resolv'd to be under the same Conduct. For I dismiss ** for the very same Reason, because I saw he doubted in some Instances if I was led by the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit: As I would dismiss all who desired to join with us, before they are convinced in their Souls that the Holy Spirit dwells in me; since our Conversation would be unprofitable to them, and would give me nothing but Disquiet and Trouble by continual Contradictions, as I have experienced in several Persons who have come to stay with me.

5. So that all I can do with respect to you is, that when you shall stay here with the Baron, you may have Occasion to converse with us, and see if you shall approve all

my Sentiments, and resolve to follow them; or if you will chuse rather to follow your own: As to both which you shall still remain free as God has created you. The Baron tells me, He will give you a particular Room in his Castle, where you may copy out and translate my Writings under a Pretext of being his Secretary; that you may still have Access to him, though he will keep his ordinary Secretary, that he may not distract you with temporal Affairs, but may let you have all your time free to attend Divine and Spiritual Things.

6. I received *M. V. D. W.*'s Letter, wherein he tells me, that he who said he was regenerate, disowns it now, and acknowledges that he was deceived and was presumptuous: So that those Friends of *F.* see now that the ill Opinion I had of my Neighbour was not without Ground, as they imagined when I got my Letter, about which I shall not be so free to write again. For if they are not perswaded that I have the Light of the Holy Spirit, they ought not to ask any Counsel of me, nor what Sentiment I have of those they pretend to know very well; since to speak according to the ordinary Apprehensions of Men, they ought to have more Understanding than I to judge of these things: And I have no Concern to enquire of God about the State of Souls, seeing I am suspected to judge rashly, and to have deceitful Revelations. For the Divine Light ought not to be scoff'd at, but to be received with Faith, Reverence and Thanksgiving, and not to be suspected of Error or a Lie. For they who will not believe me ought not to ask me any thing; since I do not lie, and I never deceived any.

7. But those well-meaning Persons will not become wise till they are once cheated by the Devil and wicked ones. I leave them all to enjoy their own Opinion, which they prefer to the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and will not spend my Time in writing to them any more. For it is in vain to speak when one is not heard.

8. I know no Friend of *M. P.* who is resign'd to the Conduct of the Holy Spirit, no more than you or he, though you ignorantly think you follow him, even when you oppose his Conduct in Simplicity and Devotion. Wherefore our Times may well be called Dangerous, in which the very Elect are deceived, as you also are; since you hold some for virtuous who are assuredly engaged

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to the Devil by exprefs Covenant, and you seek to be join'd with them for advancing the Glory of God. Think a little how this can be : I give you this fair Warning, as to many of those who think they are advanced in Virtue and Perfection.

Septemb. 21.

1677.

L E T T E R XVII.

It is not necessary for Salvation that one embrace another Sect or Party of Religion, as they do in Babel ; but that he practise the Doctrine of Christ, and become a true Christian. Of the Use and Abuse of Ceremonies and Sacraments.

My Children,

1. **I** Received all your Letters, and perceived by yours of the 8th of April, that had desired V. D. V. at Frederickstadt to come and lodge in the Jesuit's House with him; the only Design of which is to have him become Catholick. This is far from following the Light of Truth which God now sends into the World. To be saved is, and still will be needful, that a Man be truly Catholick : But all who are Romanists, are not Catholicks ; for I knew not so much as one amongst the vast Number of Romanists, with whom I was bred up. It is only from a Rule of Civility that one is called Lutheran, Calvinist, Romanist, or by any other Name ; for those Names do not make one a Christian, nor a true Catholick

2. And I would earnestly wish that ** had as much Zeal and Fervour to become a true Christian and Catholick himself, and to draw others with him to the truly Christian Faith and Virtue, and to the true Catholick Religion, as he has to bring 'em into the Roman Church ; since Rome does not render all those holy who profess to be her Children : On the contrary, the Proverb says, The

nearer Rome, the worse Christian. I have indeed known some, who from *Lutherans* turning to be *Romanists*, became worse in their Lives and Manners. And the Wife of such a Convert in *Noordstrandt* said often to Mr. *de Cort*, That her Husband was far more wicked after he became *Catholick*; and that he ceased not to sin, when he believed that all his Sins were pardon'd upon confessing them to the Priest; whereas the Fear of Hell restrain'd him from Sin while he was a *Lutheran*; which shews, that those Changes of Religion do not sanctifie Men; but the Change of Life and Manners is the true Way to become holy, and to be justly called *Catholick*: Since all who call themselves *Catholicks*, and are not holy, are Liars and Hypocrites.

3. For the Name of *Catholick* doth expressly signifie one who is in the Communion of Saints, to which those have not attain'd who continue in their Sins after they have changed their Religion, and do not labour for the Sanctification of their Souls, by denying themselves and warring against their corrupt Nature, that they may follow and imitate Christ according to the Doctrine of the Gospel. So that if you become a *Romanist*, as your good Friend wishes you may, you will go from Evil to Worse, while you believe you are advanced in Virtue, because you have changed your Name.

4. This would be a great Mistake; and if it were otherwise, I would have long ago proposed your coming over to the *Roman* Church; but because I see no Virtue in this Change, I never advised any body to it: But this Counsel I gave to all my Friends, That they would labour as much as is possible for them to become *true Christians* and the Children of God, and by this Way to enter into the Communion of Saints, being *true Catholicks*.

5. It is then that one is continually at the Lord's Table; since the Scripture says, that *A good Conscience is a continual Feast*. But he can have no saving Feast in going to the Table with Sinners and Wordly ones; since the Scripture says, (q) *Be not conformed to the World*: And elsewhere, (r) *Do not eat nor drink with wicked Men*. Those Counsels of Christ are far better than those your

(q) *Rom. 12. 2.* (r) *1 Cor. 5. 11.*

Friend gives you, to go to the Lord's Table in the Communion of those who are of the Roman Church, since this would be for your greater Condemnation, so long as your Soul is not sanctified; you would still bear falsely the Name of *Catholick*.

6. But those Jesuits, and others engaged in that Communion, would gladly draw all the World thither; and they receive indifferently all sorts of Sinners, how heinous soever they be, without making any Distinction of the Disposition of Souls, or of the Necessity or Profit of using that Sacrament. It is all one to them if they encrease the Number of their Societies. This is the Aim and View of each Party of Religion, having no Regard in this to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of their Neighbour, but only to their own Glory and Interest. This the Apostle has declar'd, when he says, *(s) And through Covetousness shall they, with feigned Words, make Merchandise of you; speaking to the People of such Guides.*

7. My Children, you must not deliver up your Souls, nor let them be thus sold by those Traders in Souls, who will hazard Peoples Salvation for a little temporal Gain or Profit, that they make by it. Hear rather what Christ tells you of this Sacrament, *(t) He who eats unworthily, eats and drinks his own Judgment.* This is come from Truth it self, which cannot lie; who has also declared, that *(u) It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and the Flesh profiteth nothing;* In the mean time, those Glossers make the People believe, that to be quicken'd they must eat this Flesh, contrary to the very Words and Meaning of the Scripture, which condemns all those who approach unto it unworthily. This confirms me in what God reveals unto me, *That the World is condemn'd*, when I see by the Effect, that Men grow worse according as they frequent this Sacrament. And yet they make them believe, that this very Sacrament will sanctifie their Souls, by making them grow in Grace; as if that which makes them die made them to live! So gross is the Darkness in this Matter through all Christendom, that the Guides impose upon the People, and make them embrace Lies for

(s) 2 Pet. 2. 3. *(t)* 1 Cor. 11. 25. *(u)* John 6. 63.

Truth. Christ says, *That they are condemn'd who receive this Sacrament unworthily, and that they receive their own Judgment*: And those Priests give it out to all, without making any Difference, that those Sacraments do give and augment the Grace of God. Is not this an *Anti-christian* Doctrine, directly contrary to that of *Jesus Christ*?

8. I know many blame me, that I go not to the Supper; and even some pious ones think, I would do better to frequent this Sacrament, pretending that I despise it: Which is false, since by my Writings I counsel all those to use this Sacrament, who are led by it unto the Love of God and the Knowledge of themselves, or to the Practice of true Virtue. Such are obliged to frequent this Sacrament as much as may be. But those who find they grow worse when they diligently frequent this Sacrament, are obliged to abstain from it. As for me, I do not find that I advance by this Sacrament, and I think the frequenting of it would be an Hindrance to my inward Recollection, since it is the Will of God that I now worship Him *in Spirit and in Truth*. I have no more need of Means, having arrived at the End. But if I had need of this Mean to be drawn to the Love of God, I would certainly make use of it; since every one is obliged to use the Means which lead him unto God. But seeing *Paul, Anthony, Hilarion*, and so many other Hermits, are held for Saints in the *Roman Church*, she cannot condemn me for not using any longer this Sacrament, having formerly used it twice a Week. I am now possess'd of what is most perfect, cleaving to the End instead of the Means, as those Hermits did, who wrought great Miracles, to make appear that their Lives and Virtues were well-pleasing unto God.

9. This ought not to offend your Friend, whose Business is to judge his own Conscience, and not to meddle with yours or mine; and this so much the rather, if he believes that the H. Spirit governs me: He should rather labour to be guided by him, than to seek to teach him, or to persuade you to frequent the Sacraments after his Way; since it would be better for him to abstain from them, when he sees that those Means do not enable him to part with his Sins by those Sacraments of Confessing and Communicating. You did well not to go to meet him

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him at *Frederickstadt* on any such Design. He has invited you to the Jesuit's House on purpose to draw you over to the *Roman Church*, as it is written, that the (u) *Pharisees compassed Sea and Land to make one Profelyte, and when he was made, they made him twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves*: So he would make you worse than you was before, if he should draw you over to his *Communion*. This he does not out of Malice, since he has a good Intention in what he aims at: But the greater Evil is oft-times done more thro' Ignorance than Malice. I must say there is some hidden thing in his Soul that is displeasing to God; for I was never enclined to converse with him, though he exprefs'd a Desire of it at *Amsterdam*.

10. It is no wonder that they have spread a Report, that I was dead in *Friezeland*, since the Devil is not to blame that I am not dead. He has employ'd all his Efforts; and it is a Miracle that I am yet alive, having been several times at the Gates of Death. But God be thank'd, I begin to recover, and to eat a little. If God judge me necessary for the Brethren, I will abide yet in this Valley of Tears; but if I am no more necessary, I will rejoice to die.

11. I am pleased with your good Purpose of applying earnestly to the Printing of my Writings; but the Effect would be more pleasing to me, and my Joy would be extream to see all the Children united with the Mother in the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*, to labour mutually to accomplish the Holy Will of God. *Amen*.

Lutzbouurg, Apr. 23.
1678.

(u) *Matth. 23. 15.*

LETTER

L E T T E R XVIII.

Those who ought to preach Jesus Christ are Enemies to the Imitation of Christ, and turn away Men from it, by the false Impressions they give unto their Minds. The Advantage of knowing the Truth.

S I R,

1. **I** Received yours of the 10th of July, and the former likewise, of which you speak in it, I perceive your People are Enemies of the Truth, and that you have none with whom you may discourse of a true Christian Life ; and that even your Preachers despise the Lowliness of *Jesus Christ*, and his State of a Servant, which you would embrace : Wherefore you have great Reason to despise in your Heart their Ignorance and Estrangement from the Way of Salvation, in which none walks, but he who doth imitate *Jesus Christ* as much as is possible for him.
2. These Priests and Scholars may gloss and mock at this Practice as they will, but neither they, nor any other, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without following and imitating in Practice the Life and Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*. It may be therefore said of such, that (a) *They shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against others, and do not enter into it themselves.*
3. I wish with you, that you may be deliver'd from this perverse Generation : But into what Place can one go where he shall not meet with it, it being already multiplied through all ? There are a few of us here, who have discover'd their Deceit, and despise their Tricks ; with whom you might reside, if there were among them more Constancy and Resolution : But it is a Body not yet form'd, in which there are many Defects : So that they who are with me may rather be call'd *Catechumens*, than true *Christians* ; and it would be to flatter them,

(a) *Matth. 23. 13.*

to make them believe, (as the deceiving *Labadists* do) *That every one of them is guided by King Jesus*; since this would be false: On the contrary, I make them see daily what Power the Devil has as yet over their Minds, and how far they are from a true Christian Life, which they discover better than they know how to help; because of the old Impressions which those Seducers of Souls have given them, who have placed the Means of Salvation in affected Words and studied Gestures, and not in Practice: Having also lulled Men asleep in a false Lethargick Repose, resting upon the Merits of Christ; since these will never be applied to any, but those who in Life shall imitate him. Therefore God will say at the last Judgment, *Behold the Man and his Works!* And not, *Behold the Man and his fine Discourses, or his fine and subtle Speculations or Arguments!* Because before God these things are prohibited Coin, which are of no Value in the Kingdom of Eternity, however they amuse Men in this World, to make them die miserable for ever.

4. And therefore bless God, *Sir*, who has awaken'd you out of the Sleep of this mortal Lethargy, which has brought so many Souls into Eternal Death. Reckon yourself more happy in that you can do servile Offices, than if you govern'd Empires and Kingdoms; as you write to me with good Reason, That you value more the Present I made you of the Second Part of *Solid Virtue*, than you would do many Tuns of Gold; since indeed it is more valuable than all Earthly Things: For it is Meat come from Heaven to nourish Souls, who hunger and thirst after Righteousness. They have reprinted it since that Time in *Latin*; I will take care that you may have also the Treatises which shall be published hereafter. You must not pay for them, since all ought to be common among true Christians, unto which State you aspire.

5. I have spoke to the Baron concerning **. He is well pleased to have him in his House for some time, if you desire it: He may then converse familiarly with us. I would gladly receive him into our Lodging, if all were well regulated and settled there; but being yet in Confusion as to many Things, that young Heart, coming
freshly

freshly out of the World, and from the Court, would perhaps be astonish'd to come to such an Extream : For here we have neither Man-Servant nor Maid-Servant. I do the Work of the Kitchin my self, and all our Brethren make their own Beds, and sweep their Chambers, thus serving themselves, that they may imitate *Jesus Christ*, who says, (c) *That he came not to be served, but to serve.*

6. We must even of Necessity serve our selves, for we can find none that will serve us according to the Will of God. I took in of late Three *Holland* Maids, thinking to be freed by them from the Service of the Table, that I might be the better able to attend the imparting the Light that God gives me unto others; but those gave me much more Business and Distraction than Ease; so that I was forced to dismiss them all, chusing rather to serve and suffer with the Children of God, than to be served by carnal and perverse Sinners. As for Mr. **, he has had a long Fever, which has now left him; he resides at **, and designs to return hither shortly to close with the strait Truth, forsaking his Errors, which now he abhors. I can say no more: The Post goes off. *Adieu.*

$\frac{13}{23}$ Aug. 1678.

Antonia Bourignon.

(c) *Matth. 20. 28.*

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Of the Clergy-mens being Enemies to the Truth ; and their poisoning of Souls, while they make the Imitation of Jesus Christ to be a Thing above our Reach, and impute the Aiming at it to Rashness and Presumption. Holy Exhortations.

S I R,

1. I Was astonish'd to learn by yours of the 9th of September of this Year, that the Priests of your Religion would not receive the Light of Truth, which God now sends upon the Earth, but reject and despise it as much as they can. It is lamentable, that those who ought to embrace the Divine Light to follow it, and to persuade the People to follow it, do calumniate it, and persecute the Truth which is of God, and will not be satisfied with not following it themselves, but will needs hinder others also, telling you, *That it is a pity that so brave a Man as you should let your Mind be infatuated with new Doctrines.* This is indeed Matter of Regret as to their poor Souls. For they are of those wretched blind ones of whom Christ speaks in the Gospel, saying, *(d) Because you say, We see, therefore you are blind ; but if you saw your Blindness, you would see clearly.*

2. For if their Eyes were open, they would see clearly that I bring no new Doctrine ; since it is the same which Christ taught 1678 Years ago, and not only from that Time, but from the Creation of the World. To be saved one was always obliged to love God, and to die to Self-love ; and all my Writings, and the Doctrine that God teaches me, have no other Aim, but to persuade Men to return to the Love of God ; at which also both the Law of Nature and the Law given by Moses do aim.

3. The Gospel and my Writings are in Substance nothing else but the Abridgement, yea, the Perfection

(d) John 9. 41.

of all those Laws, which these Slanderers call by the Name of *New Doctrines*, instead of perceiving that the Doctrine and Glosses which they boast of and profess, are Doctrines altogether new, invented by a *Calvin*, or some such one, which have arisen but about 100 Years ago, or a little more, being broached by vicious Persons, who by their Looseness had falsified their Faith and Promise made to God and Men, inventing some new Doctrines wherewith to cloak their Luxury, and shake off that Yoke of Evangelical Perfection, which they had promised by Vows and Oaths publicly made unto God in the Presence of Men. And to avoid the Confusion they ought to suffer for their Sins and Infidelities, they cover'd their Filth with new Doctrines, disguised with Piety and Religion; though in effect their Inventions have nothing in them that is religious or true. They are nothing but cunning Words for darkning Mens Minds, and making them believe a Lie.

4. For my part, I hold it to be a Doctrine of Devils what you write to me those Preachers do affirm, to wit, *That they are presumptuous and impious Persons, who would believe and say, That by the Grace of God they can imitate Jesus Christ; and, That they give the People so great Idea's of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, that they would reckon it a Sin to desire so much as to think of imitating him. Thus they flatter Men in their Frailty, telling them, that they must not compare themselves in any thing to Christ to imitate him.* This is nothing but false Paint wherewith to colour their Sins, and to have the Ear of the People: For without this Invention, that one cannot imitate Christ, and that it is Humility for one to know that he is too frail for this Imitation, Men would not have Quiet.

5. And with what Face could those Reformers appear before Men of Honour and Understanding, to make them embrace their new Doctrines? Since they might have reproached them for their Infidelity in falsifying their Vows and Oaths made to God in the Face of the Church, to observe the Gospel-Law, by living all their Life in perpetual Chastity, voluntary Poverty, and entire Obedience, which are the Vows and Promises that all the Priests and Religious of the Roman Church do make voluntarily, with an Oath, That none has induced or

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obliged them to those Vows, which are absolutely voluntary, and not constrain'd but from the good Desire they had at that time to be the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*. But after that the Devil had prevail'd with them to break their Oaths, and give loose Reins to the Sentiments of their corrupt Natures, they studied Night and Day to find out Glosses, false Reasons and Arguments, wherewith to cover their Sins, that Men might not behold their Shame; even as *Adam* did, who sought Leaves to cover his Nakedness after his Sin. He durst no more appear before God, while he saw himself naked. Thus did these Reformers after their Sins: They sought the Leaves of frivolous Reasons and Arguments, which they threw abroad, that they might avoid Confusion for their Abominations before Men; endeavouring to lay open the Faults of others, that they might cover their own: As if the Sins committed by others would lessen theirs. Thus those unhappy Persons have advanced to worse, and would now maintain, that the Virtue of imitating *Jesus Christ* is a Sin, to the End that none might exceed 'em in Virtue, and thereby give 'em some Confusion.

6. For if they taught, *That we ought to imitate Jesus Christ*, and that they, whilst they were in the World, did the quite contrary, they would condemn themselves, and sink the Credit of their Doctrine, which has sent so many into Hell, seeing it is *Anti-Christian*. For Christ teaches us in many Places, (e) *To do Penitence, to take up the Cross, to follow and imitate him, that we may be his Disciples; to deny our selves, to follow the strait Way, to take the last Place, to lose our Life that we may find it;* with so many other Passages of Scripture which threaten Damnation to those who do not imitate *Jesus Christ*; so that one must cancel and raze out all the Scripture to maintain this new and damnable Doctrine advanced by your Preachers, who place the Way of Salvation in the broad Way that leads to Damnation, calling *The strait Way that leads to Salvation*, the Sin of Invidia and Ambition; and thus they overthrow the Doctrine of Christ, which is the only sure Way and the only Door that gives Entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

(e) *Luke* 13. 3, 5. *Matth.* 16. 24. *Ibid.* 7. 13. *Luke* 14. 10. *Matth.* 10. 39.

7. I exhort you therefore to persevere in the excellent Practice of the *Imitation of Christ*, in denying your self, resisting your old and evil Habits, as I hear with Joy you do, since yours shews me the Desire you have to live yet, that you may do sincere Penitence, for which we are sent into this World, and not to seek our Conveniencies here, and take our Pleasures, as those *Calvinists* give you to understand by their damnable Doctrines, from which I pray God preserve you. Hold what you have. Those who will needs perish, let them alone. God has created all Men free. He forces no body to be saved.

8. The Resolution you have taken not to talk of, nor shew my Writings to any, is good; since Men now render themselves unworthy of the Designs that God has concerning them. I would greatly rejoice if I had begotten you unto Christ, as you tell me in yours; and I would die with Content, if I left one Heir of my Spirit. My Life is nothing but a Course of Maladies. I know not if I shall live long now. It is all one to me whether I live or die in Christ. But I desire that you and others, who have discovered the Light of Truth by my Writings, may cleave closely to it. They will never deceive you, since they are dictated by the Holy Spirit, who cannot err. There is nothing of mine in them. I am nothing but his Organ by which he speaks to others. Live and die in my Sentiments, as you say you are resolved to do, and you shall live and die happy and contented even in this World. The being bodily distant is a small matter. We shall be united in Body and Spirit in Eternity, if you persevere in my Sentiments, which are not mine, but come immediately from God. This you ought to believe of her who loves your Soul,

Octob. 28.

1678.

A. B.

M. N. entreats you may not put the Letters you send me in a Cover to him, since, like *Nicodemus*, he desires not that every one should know of our Friendship. *Humane Weakness!*

LETTER

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LETTER XX.

Of the Degeneracy of the Church. The Way of false Reformations, and of the true. How few Christians there are.

S I R,

1. **I** Perceived by yours of the 14th of February the Light that God gives you touching the Degeneracy of *Christianity*, and the *Confusion* there is in it, by so many Divisions, Sects, Churches, and different Opinions; whereas all ought to be one in the Spirit of Christ. And I believe all understanding Men do perceive, as you do, the Degeneracy of the Church of God, that she is become a Whore and Adulteress, falsifying the Faith she owes to Christ, her lawful Husband: For we do not see that the Church doth in any thing conform her self in Practice to his Doctrine.

2. The only Good I observe is, that she retains yet the Letter of the Gospel, which preserves the Memory of the Behaviour of Christ, his Apostles, and the Christians of the Primitive Church. But I am afraid this Memory will serve Christians now for their greater Condemnation, while they form their Lives in a Way directly contrary to the Life and Doctrine of Christ, which they read in the Gospel: So that they ought to look for greater Chastisements, since it is written, that (i) *He who knew his Father's Will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.*

3. Many have attempted, and do daily attempt, to cure so great Evils by Reformations, and new Institutions of Christian Exercises; but they have succeeded so ill, that they have deformed the Church of God, instead of reforming her, and have made her a greater and more abominable Whore than she was before, having planted in the Hearts of Christians, Hatred, Contempt, Enmity, yea, Rage and Fury against one another, instead of the

(i) Luke 12. 47.

Love, Meekness and Good-will that Christ did so particularly recommend unto them. Which makes sufficiently appear, as to all these Reformations, that they have not come from God, but from the Devil and Mens corrupt Minds, who would glory over others ; and having become zealous for some Opinions which they thought good, and communicated them to others, they were blindly received by many, who not discovering the Evils which those Divisions would produce, embraced Errors for Truths. This has brought forth so many divers Sorts of Religions and Breaches in the Church of God.

4. For they who discover'd the Error that was in the Reformation of *Luther*, submitted to that of *Calvin*, in which also some discovering many Errors follow'd the Sentiments of *Menno* (or the *Anabaptists*,) in which perceiving themselves likewise to be deceived, they embrac'd the Sentiments of *Arminius*. And thus through a Restlessness of Spirit, they have leap'd from one Religion to another, and that insatiably ; since we see yet new Sects and Sentiments arising, and contradicting one another.

5. The Reason of this is, that the Souls of Men can find no Rest but in the Truth of God, and that these Reformations have not followed this Truth ; but out of their own Brains (corrupted by Sin) they have forged humane Truths, which have nothing but an outward Shew, without any Reality of the Truth of God. And this Evil has encreased in Christendom to this very Day, when we yet hear in divers Places of the starting up of some new Sects, each of which is counted the best by its Followers, though all of them in general, and every one of them in particular, avail nothing ; since they are all but Inventions of Men, of whom the Scripture says, (k) *That all are Liars ; and that there is nothing more deceitful than the Heart of Man* (l).

6. None of those have understood, that to make a Reformation we must take up closely with the first Institution of the Thing that we would reform, and not at all stray from its Rules and Constitutions : For to do otherwise is to make a new Institution, and not a Reforma-

(k) *Rom.* 3. 4. (l) *Jer.* 17. 9.

tion of a Thing already made and establish'd. Now the true Church of God was instituted by Jesus Christ personally, when he cloath'd himself with our Mortality. Then it was that he espoused our Souls by a perpetual Alliance, having united himself to our Corruption, that he might bring us back again unto the right Way of Salvation, from which we had wander'd. He took us by the Hand, saying, (m) *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* (n) *I am the Door; who so entreth by me shall be sav'd.* His Disciples, and the first Christians follow'd him in his Paths, and entred in by that strait Gate which he taught them, despising the Pleasures, Honours and Riches of this World. But now they who are called *Christians* esteem all these things, and count themselves happy in possessing them, despising the Lowliness and Poverty of Christ their Captain, who walk'd before them to give 'em an Example. They follow their fleshly Appetites, instead of denying them, as Christ teaches, though the Scripture saith, that (o) *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.*

7. These Reformers or Instituters of new Religions do not understand this Language, and will not return to themselves, but they found their Reformations upon some School-Opinions, which consist in their imaginary Speculations, where are begotten divers Sentiments, which they often call *Articles of Faith*, though they are only the fantastical Thoughts of their corrupted Imaginations.

8. For I know not so much as one Party of Religion that exerciseth it self in the Mortification of Self-love, nor in the Imitation of Christ. Each one seek themselves, their own Glory, and their own Interest, and that even among the most Reform'd by Name, and the most Spiritual as to Words: Yea, there are some of those last Sectaries, who say, That carnal Acquaintance between Persons of different Sexes is nothing but Christian Intimacy and Friendship. They are, as the Scripture tells of those of the last Times, (p) *That they shall be as in the Days of Noah, they ate, and drank, and married, until the Flood came and destroy'd them all.* And these are the most cunning Sectarians, who abandon the World, and have

(m) *John* 14. 6. (n) *Ibid.* 10. 9. (o) *1 Cor.* 15. 50.
(p) *Luke* 17. 26, 27.

all in common, and say, *They are sent to restore Israel,* expecting here the Kingdom of Christ.

9. So that I cannot see how the Church of God can be re-establish'd by Means of the Reformations of Men; because I perceive they are all Earthly, and wedded to the good Things of this wretched Life. To begin *this Conference of good Christians*, of which you speak, we must find out sincere Persons entirely abandon'd to the Will of God, who would in all things deny themselves, that they might be govern'd by the Spirit of Christ, in following the Doctrine of the Gospel; seeing without this such a Conference of good Christians would be only a new Sect, like the rest, who did all take their Beginning under the Cover of living as true Christians, and according to the Gospel, though in effect no such thing follow'd, since the best of them have nothing of the true Christian, but many things in their Deportment that are truly *Anti-Christian*.

10. Wherefore I can give you no Advice as to your Proposal, of *Establishing a Conference of real Christians*; because I know none such. I know many well dispos'd People, scatter'd up and down in divers Places and Parties; but I know not one who will effectually deny himself, that he may follow *Jesus Christ*. They have indeed a Desire of doing so, but they fall extreamly short in the Practice. I hope God will dispose Hearts, who shall be united in his Spirit; and then they shall confer Heart to Heart. In the mean time, I wish you may have the Curiosity to read all my Writings, which will give you more Clearness than my particular Letter can do, and open your Understanding to discover Things which you never heard of before, yea, which have not entred into the Heart of Man. I pray God this Reading may make the true Love of God to spring up in your Soul. In this Wish I remain,

S I R,

Lutzbouurg, March 6.

1679.

Your most Humble Servant,

A. B.

LET,

L E T T E R XXI.

The Difficulties which seem to be in the Works of God occasion greater Light and Edification; and Men ought not to meddle with mending or correcting them, or interpreting them in an humane Way.

My Children,

1. **I** Have not as yet seen the Explication that ** has given upon what I said of the Baptism of Children: But I know in general, that God willeth not that Men correct his Faults, when they imagine that he has done any. For it happen'd one Day (when I was at *Mechlin*) that *Monfr. Noels*, a great Divine, was sorry that I had written something, which seem'd contrary to the Sentiments of *St. Augustin*; that this would offend the Well-meaning, who build upon this holy Man. He intended also to correct the Orthography of my Writings; both which I recommended unto God, who said unto me; *It does not become Men to correct the Works of God*; at which *Mr. Noels* was affrighted, and said unto me, *I will never pretend any more to correct any thing, not even the Orthography. For I know by my own Experience, that those Faults and the Simplicity of your Stile, has brought forth great Fruit in my Soul when I copied them out; For I found clearly that there was no humane Study there; and that the Holy Spirit himself must have dictated your Writings.*

2. Wherefore I would have them very cautious in explaining or correcting my Sentiments, since it is the Will of God that every one know that this perfect Doctrine proceeds not from Learned Persons or Scholars; and I have often seen by Experience, that the Faults which in Mens Opinion I have committed in my Writings, have occasion'd a further Discovery and Illustration from the same Master who dictated them; he taking occasion thereby to make me enlarge the more on what was doubtful,

3. I believe it is for the same Reason that Jesus Christ says, (r) *It must needs be that Offences come, but woe to him by whom the Offence cometh.* This Woe may happen to El. and such as he, who would have all things conformable to their Sentiments, that they may approve 'em. This the other Parties of Religion would have likewise, and they reject as Evil all the Sentiments which are contrary to theirs; which shews their Partiality, Self-love and Jealousie of others.

4. For instead of desiring to be clear'd as to the Doubts they meet with in my Writings, that they may be inform'd of the Truth, they condemn them blindly, and will needs have to pass for Heresies, the greatest and most hidden Mysteries of God, which he would not reveal till the last Times, in which we live at present: As to which every one cannot be satisfied; for one condemns that which another doth greatly approve: As the *Mennonists* own, that Children ought not to be baptized in their Infancy; and the Reformed hold this for Heresie. Is it not better to despise all those Sentiments which Men have contrary to one another, and to cleave to that which the Holy Spirit dictates concerning them in our Days; seeing those who have Doubts about them may freely write them to me, and make appear the Ignorance of their Opinions, and become wise by my Answers? You know *The Testimony of the Truth* had its Rise from Contradictions that were written to me, and so also the *Touch-stone*, and the *Warning against the Quakers*. How many excellent Truths have thereby come to Light, which had never appear'd? And who knows if it is not the Will of God that I explain my self further about the Baptism of Children, that I may farther discover the Abuse of it?

5. Therefore it would be better always to let things be as they are first dictated; since it is written, (s) *That he who seeks to please Men is not the Servant of Christ.* And so much the rather that I have often seen, that the things which gave them most Offence, were those which did most edifie them, after they were once well understood. A Man must not, after *Uzzab's* Way, seek to uphold the Ark for fear it fall; since it is written,

(r) *Matth.* 18. 7. (s) *Gal.* 1. 10.

(t) *Thas*

(t) *That he who hopes in the Lord shall never be confounded.*
 Let all those learned and partial ones rise up against me; the Lord hath promised, that *He will give me his Grace,* by which I shall easily overcome them all... Those false Prophets who go into *England*, will quickly come to nothing of themselves, since they are founded only upon the Sand, and not upon the Truth of God...

June 5.

1679.

L E T T E R XXII.

That it is not fit to change from one Religion to another, all being void of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; but that a Man ought to cleave unto the Doctrine of the Gospel, and become a true Christian, serving God in Spirit and in Truth.

S I R,

1. **I** Rejoice to find still by your Letters, that God does more abundantly communicate unto you his Grace by the means of my Writings. I beg he may be pleased to continue to do so while you live. As to the Change of Religion, I find it no ways convenient, and I regret with all my Heart that any Reformers should have arisen to seduce many; since all those Changes have produced nothing but Enmity among Christians; whereas Christ commands us to love one another, whereby it may be known that we are his Disciples.

2. Therefore I do not at all advise you to follow your new Resident in his Religion; but chuse rather to reform your Soul, than to change your Religion; since no Religion can save you: That we may obtain Salvation, the Love of God must dwell in our Souls: All things else are only Means to attain to this Love.

(t) *Psal. 34. 22.*

E 4

3. You

3. You must not therefore cleave to them as to the End. If you find more Love in changing your Religion, and embracing the Resident's, you will be obliged to do so. But I believe this would bring no Perfection to your Soul; since the Spirit of God is now banish'd from all Sorts of Religions, and is no longer to be found, but in the Doctrine of the Gospel, which all Christians ought to put in Practice, without regarding what Name they bear, whether that of *Romanists, Calvinists, Lutherans*, or any other Sectary. It is enough that one is a *true Christian*, under what Denomination soever he goes.

4. Wherefore I am far from desiring one to change his Religion, knowing that Inconstancy comes from the Devil. I advise you therefore to continue in your Religion, remaining a *Calvinist* in Name, but a *Christian* in Heart. I know there is much more of outward Piety in the Papacy, than among the other Parties of Religion; but these holy Things are abused: And as God himself, tho' he caused the Brazen-Serpent to be made to cure the Stinging of the Serpents, yet order'd to break the same when the People made an ill Use of it; so God will now be worshipped *in Spirit and in Truth*, since they have abused all sacred Things. This you may believe from her, who remains,

S I R,

Lutzbouurg in East-
Friezeland, Febr. 5.
1680.

Your most Humble Servant,

Antonia Bourignon.

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OF
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Drawn up by the AUTHOR Her self.

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